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ART AND LETTERS



THE BULLFINCH

A SKETCH

"I must have a black gown!" said Lula.

She had set her heart on a black gown. She was a pretty brown child, with bare feet and bare head and bare arms; nearly seventeen years old, and as saucy as a squirrel, and as agile as one. She lived at a little stone cottage at a place where four roads met. Her father was a road mender; it is hard work and ill paid, but he was a cheery man, and did not complain. The four roads were little traversed except by shepherds with their flocks, and herdsmen with their carts. Two were Roman-made roads, fine and durable, solid as a slab of rock; two were quite youthful roads, only about a hundred years old, or so, and these were ill made, and soft, and constantly breaking. These roads tra-

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versed a plain sown with wheat and planted with vines, a vast plain, green or yellow or brown according to season, with a low line of mountains visible many miles off, and many miles farther still, in the opposite direction, a hazy silvery line which was said to be the sea.

Lula had never been farther than her feet could carry her on one of the four roads; and she was seldom able to go as far as that, for she had everything to do, being the only female creature in the cottage. Her father and her two brothers were terrible hands at wearing out shirts and breeches; she span, plaited, swept, cooked, sewed, kept the little garden in order, and attended to the pigs in the sty, the bees in the hive, and the fowls in the outhouse; she was a good little girl who got up at dawn, and went to bed at *Ave Maria,* but the day was never long enough for her.

She worked hard, and sang over her work, and had no nonsense in her little brain, because, happily for herself, she could not read a line. She could only keep her house tidy, and make her men comfortable, which she did better than most of her compeers, because her mother had been a woman from the north, and had trained her in clean and wholesome ways.

The mother had been dead two years, but her lessons remained in Lula's heart and conscience.

She had all day long one little companion and friend; a bullfinch, a *Caponero* in the tongue of that province. He had been given to her when he was but a little nestling, and she had reared him and educated him, and loved him dearly, though he loved her more dearly still. His name was Zi-Zi, and he was four years old; he sang marvellously; she had sung the *Nel silenzio della notte* and other songs of the peasantry until he whistled them to perfection, and he had besides many melodies of his own.

Zi-Zi was the little Robin-goodfellow of the house, and his sweet piping could be heard far out into the fields.

He was always free to come and go in and out of his cage, and even in and out of the house as he chose; he never went farther afield than that, and was the happiest little bird in all the cruel world of men. He would obey all she told him; and ate out of her hand and out of her lips; he bustled and chirped about her all day long, and awakened her in the morning. The men were all fond of him, and her future

husband often said : "He is jealous of me, but I love him all the better for that."

For Lula was betrothed; her *damo* was a handsome fellow who was a carter and a teamster, and lived at an old grange, three miles away, in the centre of the wide wheat plains. His name was Hugo, and his fame as a good fellow, a pretty singer, and a brave ball player, was great in the country-side through which he drove his waggons of grain, with the horses in them that his masters had bought somewhere very far away, France or Flanders, nobody knew where, but which with their solid limbs, their arched necks, and their vast stature, seemed like elephants or mammoths beside the lean little Fiuli horses in use in that district.

Lula was a very proud little girl when her sweetheart came in sight, carolling *Stornelli* lustily, with some carnations behind his ears, and pheasants' feathers and foxes' tails swaying at the ears of his team. To and fro, backwards and forwards along those long level white roads, from the broad grain fields to the town lying out of sight under the blue haze in the far distance, Hugo and his horses travelled constantly with the waggon-loads of corn or straw, and it was during these journeys that he and Lula had made first acquaintance, and then courtship, and the big team knew so well that little cottage by the meeting of the cross-roads that they stopped of their own accord under the shadow of its one huge plane-tree.

Hugo was only a *bracceante* (a day-labourer) which in this country is thought very low, but he was a fine fellow, and sober and industrious, and full of bright good humour.

"The child will be poor, but she is used to that, and she might do worse," said Lula's father on consenting to her betrothal; he himself would miss her terribly, he knew, but one of his sons wanted to marry and bring a woman into the house, so "the one thing slipped into the other like a tool into its handle," said the good man, and all was well.

Hugo had two big breezy rooms where he lived, overlooking the cornfields, while the cart-horses champed in their stalls below, and in summer the straw lay like the waves of a yellow sea, tossed and heaped all about everywhere in the large stone court; the child would be very

well placed there. So the marriage was to be at Ognissanti; a leisure time with the teamster, for the roads were then bad, and the grain of the year has always been by that date either stacked or sold.

Lula was very happy; she was very fond of her handsome Hugo, and their loves were as playful and merry as those of two greenfinches in glad March weather amongst peach blossoms and daffodils. Only one sorrow weighed heavily on Lula's light little heart; she wanted a black gown—wanted it so dreadfully,—and she could not possibly ever get it. Not to be married in a black gown seems to a Tuscan maiden as it would seem to a French or English one not to be married in a white gown. Unless a girl has a black gown to go to church in, she feels degraded, vulgar, unseemly in Tuscany; and a black gown was as high out of Lula's reach as the feather robes of Paradise. A black gown of cashmere, properly made, and with some ruffles of lace at the throat and the wrist, was the ideal of her innocent childish soul. But under thirty francs, forty even, perhaps, such a gown was not to be had, and Lula might as well have wished for the bands of Orion as for thirty francs. She and her people and her betrothed were all of them very poor, with scarcely means enough to fill the pot and the platter, and keep upon them decent homely clothes. To save up enough to pay the priest's fees and the registry fees was the uttermost that her father and Hugo could manage to do between them.

As for a new gown, a cashmere gown, a black gown—when she ventured to speak of it, her father and brothers told her roughly to stop such idle pining.

"Hugo takes you without *dota* or *vezze*,—be grateful to him," they said angrily; for to be married when you cannot give with yourself some sort of dower and a string of small pearls is a miracle; some dower, if only ten pounds, and some pearls if only small as sage, are essential to every bride, however poor.

The dower and the pearls she knew well she could never aspire to, but the black gown!—waking and sleeping Lula dreamed of a black gown. It was oftener in her thoughts than Hugo was. The nearest and dearest friend she had, the daughter of a man as poor as her own father, had had a black gown, the gift of a godmother, on her marriage at the last

vintage time. But Lula knew not even who her godmother had been once. There was no chance of a fairy *Comare* coming down from the skies. To be wedded without a black gown is to be the laughing-stock, the by-word, the ridicule of all other women; it is a confession of the most abject poverty, the most complete misery; it is to fall at once from the ranks of the decent, respectable working classes, into the naked wants of the hopelessly poor. Custom is law, says a Tuscan proverb; and in no country is the individual so abjectly, entirely, and tremblingly, the slave of custom. *El'uso* is a fact beyond which there is no appeal for either high or low.

To be married without a black gown clouded all her happy days to Lula. To have to wear her russet stuff Sunday gown already patched and darned on her wedding day, was humiliation and misery unspeakable. But there was no help for it.

"*Corredo? Che!*" said her father: how should they get bridal clothes, when they could scarcely get bread and oil to eat?

Thirty francs was to them a sum as enormous and unattainable as if it had been thirty millions.

There are pedlars who come out to those lonely rural peasants; pedlars who walk or at most have a donkey to drag their long light cart filled with rolls and bales of wearing apparel. They are the miniature Mephistopheles, the petty usurers of the country-side; women are tempted by the smartness and apparent cheapness of their wares, and get into debt to them, and never get out of it, and cheat their fathers and husbands and brothers and lovers in consequence. Lula's innocence and honesty would not probably have been more proof against temptation than were those of others, but no pedlar would sell to her on credit. With the daughters and wives of the peasantry it was different; there was a farm more or less rich behind them; they could save on the sly from eggs, or milk, or fruit, they could give the salesmen drinks of good wine, slices of good *polenta*. But Lula was too poor to do this, and the pedlar who had a black cashmere on his cart, showed it to her, and expatiated on it, and tortured her with the sight of it; but locked it up in his box again:

"*Senza soldi, mai,*" he said ruthlessly.

If she had been going to marry a well-to-do man, then indeed he might have let her have it, and the bridegroom might have paid for it afterwards. But the pedlar, whose business it was to know all about everybody, knew that Hugo the carter was as poor as Job, with no riches present or prospective except his youth and his health and his strength.

So, "*Senza soldi, mai!*" he said sternly, shutting up the gown-stuff in the wooden box with the big padlock, which contained his choicest goods. Without the money for it, never!

And Lula sobbed as if her heart would break, as she saw the donkey-cart wind its slow way along one of the roads between the fallow fields, where the corn had long been reaped, and the grass was springing. For it was nearly October, and if the cashmere gown could not be bought and made very quickly, All Saints' Day would have already dawned, and she would have to go to church in her russet patched frock.

The pedlar went plodding on in the dust under the ripe grapes of the vines which bordered the road, and all her hopes went with him.

"He might have let me have it. I would have surely paid him some-time," she thought, with that happy-go-lucky trust in the friendliness of Fortune, which makes so much of the misery of the improvident poor.

Suddenly the donkey stopped, the cart turned, and the pedlar came back slowly through the sunshine. Lula's heart flew high as heaven as she stood under the plane-tree, and her tears ceased. He was coming to offer it to her. She ran to meet him, with hot cheeks, and eyes dancing through her tears.

"You are going to give it me, dear Pietro?" she said, caressingly. "Oh, do give it me, and I will never eat a mouthful till I pay you!"

"*Che!*" said the pedlar, with scorn for her simplicity. "I must see the notes in my hand before I give it you. You are a pretty girl, and a good one, and I am very fond of you, but business is business, and money is money. However, I came back to tell you that there is a way, now I think of it, by which you might make the money, and no trouble to you either."

"Nothing dishonest?" asked Lula.

"No, no, bless your soul. I am not a bad man, am I? Pietro likes money, Pietro never denies it, but Pietro is as pure as asses' milk, not a drop of poison ever in him."

"But what can I do?" said Lula, impatiently cutting short his pæan of self-admiration, which would otherwise have scarce ended at broad noon.

"What a lass you are to bite one's nose off," said Pietro : "Well, you can sell Zi-Zi."

"Sell Zi-Zi!"

Lula stared with her black eyes round as moons :

"Why, who would buy him? A little common bird, a mere wild blackcap!"

"A blackcap for a black gown," said the old pedlar with a chuckle. "A rare proper exchange, eh? Rhymes like a *fioretta*. Well, it so happens that I know a lady who asked me to get her a piping blackcap, and your Zi-Zi has a rare pipe of his own. She is a foreigner. Foreigners are always cracked-pates. They buy all the rubbish we show them. Give me Zi-Zi, and I will take him to her to-morrow, and try and get her to give as much as you want for the gown."

"Sell Zi-Zi!" repeated Lula stupidly.

The little bird, hearing his name thus repeated, flew out of the house, and circled round her head, and fluttered and chirruped, and then, with a flash of his wings in the sunlight, darted up over the plane leaves, and there broke into sweetest song.

"Oh, I could not sell Zi-Zi!" she murmured, with a pale scared face; "I could not, I could not!—and Hugo is so fond of him!"

"Just as you please," said the pedlar; "I only wished to please you. For myself I would sooner keep the cashmere, for I shall want it for the Rossi's wedding, and it is a beautiful rare piece of goods. Only don't ever say again that Pietro wouldn't do you a good turn when he had the chance. Pietro has a heart of gold."

Then he pulled roughly at his donkey's mouth, and turned round the cart once more.

Zi-Zi, above, amongst the plane leaves, was pouring out the *Nel silenzio della notte,* in a flood of exquisite silvery melody.

The pedlar had only come up so far out of his way that morning because he had had for several weeks a commission to buy a piping bullfinch, and had found none, and so had remembered Lula's Zi-Zi; and had gone this roundabout way to work, because no Italian ever takes a straight road if he can find a devious one. He meant to get fifty, sixty, perhaps seventy francs from the foreigner whose pate was cracked, and if he then sold the cashmere into the bargain, even if he had to part with thirty francs as Zi-Zi's price, he would make a day's work out of it such as was sweet to his peddling soul.

"Wait a moment, wait," said Lula, breathlessly.

And she was very pale, and kept glancing upward at the little singing bird, as though he could know his fate was in the balance.

"Would he be happy, do you think?" she said in a low, shamed voice.

"*Che!*" replied Pietro, with boundless contempt, "birds are happy anywhere, if that matters, and where he'd go is a palace with fountains and flowers and fine glass places and a power of silver and of gold everywhere; happy!—Lord, if he sings one tune here, he'll sing twenty there. Catch him, and give him to me! And here's the cashmere all at once, my dear, beautiful rare stuff, given away for a song."

"Oh, I can't, I can't!" she muttered, shrinking away from the cart as the flood of the little bird's song poured through the sunlit air. "I'll never be at peace again if I sell Zi-Zi, and why should anybody ever buy him for all that money, a little common bird?"

She was doubtful, suspicious, ashamed, envious, tortured; she longed passionately for the gown; but her heart was warm, and she loved Zi-Zi. Moreover she was stupefied and incredulous. She knew nothing of foreigners or rich people and their fancies; it seemed to her utterly impossible that any one could give such an enormous sum for one little tiny bird, which would be sold for a farthing to stick on a spit.

The pedlar thrust the cashmere on her, but she was suspicious, and though her whole soul was pining for it, would not take it so.

"You would declare afterwards that I was in debt for it," she said rudely to the old man, who raised his hands to heaven in horror at such a foul aspersion.

And she would not believe him, nor accept the stuff, nor give the bird.

Poor little Zi-Zi, all the while, unconscious of the conspiracy against him, was singing his little heart out of his body in his joy at the sunbeams, and the leaves, and the blue sky, and the answering notes of some wood-larks flying through the vines. It was their season of the year to sing, and was not his, but that did not matter to Zi-Zi. He sang all the year through, whenever he heard his mistress's voice or laughter.

The pedlar got very angry, he swore, and bullied, and compelled, and cajoled, and flattered; and the black cashmere lay all the while spread out on the lid of the box, with some white cotton lace which was generously to be given in with it.

"I'm ruining myself," he declared, "but it is all for love of you, and to keep my promise to the lady to take her a blackcap. And then you ungrateful, graceless, disbelieving, stony-hearted little jade, go and say that I am lying, and that I've some hidden interest to serve!"

"I only say I'll see where Zi-Zi goes, if I let him go," said Lula.

And her voice was dogged and low with a sound as of shame in it.

"Then I'll take you," said Pietro, with fury and reluctance, seeing all his hoped-for gains gliding away from him into the haze of uncertainty. "Then I'll take you, Lula, daughter of Gian; I'll take you, and you may get what you can, but I'll never let you have that cashmere,—never, so help me Heaven. That ever a sixteen-year old wench, that I nursed on my knee as a babe, should doubt the honest word of her friend, her best friend, her oldest friend! Ah, it is women are vile core through; and Pietro is a fool, a thrice accursed fool, to wear his aged bones out in serving them. The girl's dying for the gown, and I remember a foreigner's whim to serve her, and I put her in the way of getting a fine wedding-dress, lace and all for nothing, and she won't give up a little hedge dickey-bird that is only fit to be took in a mouthful of pastry!"

And so eloquently did he talk, and so greatly did he magnify his benevolence, and so craftily did he appeal to her self-love and her vanity, and so completely did he confuse her mind and fan the heat of her greed,

that after two hours' excited disputes, both talking hard one against another, with the donkey standing asleep in the sun, and the cashmere lying outspread on the cart, Lula, ashamed of what she did, with a feeling of guilt and a loud-throbbing heart, afraid lest the very stones in the road should hear her, said in a hoarse, abashed whisper :

"Well, I'll give him, then, if you're sure he'll be happy, and if you'll throw me those three yards of ribbon in with the gown."

"What a wench!" groaned the pedlar, half in horror of such avarice, half in homage of her shrewdness. "To think she was a babe at the breast a summer or two ago, and now would talk the very heart out of a good old man like Pietro, and leave him penniless to please her, on his dying bed."

But despite his torrents of reproaches and regrets, he was quick to secure his bargain; he made up the cashmere and the lace and the ribbon for trimming, into a parcel, and wrote out on an atom of yellow paper, a clear receipt for all of them as of "Value received in full," and then, with his hand laid firmly upon them, he said to her :

"Now give me Zi-Zi in his cage, and all these are your own. Make haste, for I've got far to go with him, and I've lost all the morning here."

Lula had a blanched, frightened look, as of guilt on her face; her ruddy lips had grown quite colourless, and trembled.

"You're sure he'll be loose where he goes?" she whispered.

"Loose!" said the pedlar, roughly, "loose, yes! He'll fly about all day long among the fountains and the flowers. Come, look sharp, and get him into the cage. I can't waste all the day here."

Zi-Zi, who had been darting hither and thither, taking a drop of water out of a pan, snatching an atom of thistle-down off a plant, cropping a bit of cress from the brook-side, searching for a belated caterpillar under the leaves, but always keeping one little bright black eye fixed on Lula, was now perched on the sill of the casement, sending out all manner of sweet trills, and triplets, and liquid roulades, a linnet answering him from a thicket of rose-bushes.

"Zi-Zi! Zi-Zi!" called Lula.

"Zi!" said the little bird in joyous and confident response.

And he flew up from the window-sill on to her shoulder, and pecked in his pretty, caressing way at the rosy tip of her little brown ear.

"*Va cuccia,* Zi-Zi!" she said, in a faint hoarse voice.

It was her good-night word of command; it was the order to go to bed, and Zi-Zi could not understand it at that hour of bright midday, with the broad sun shining in the zenith, and his friends the linnets and the wood-larks in full sport and song.

"*Va cuccia!*" said Lula, more sharply.

And then the little bird, knowing she was in earnest, and sorrowfully supposing he was some way in fault, sadly left his loved place upon her shoulder, and flew slowly and reluctantly to the cottage, and entered the little rusty cage which served him as a sleeping-place, and of which the door stood open day and night.

"Zi-Zi," he chirped, as he flew to his perch with a melancholy protest in the notes.

What had Zi-Zi done that he was punished?

"Take him!" said the girl, savagely.

Then she buried her face in her hands not to see.

The pedlar went indoors, reached down the cage, closed the little wire wicket, and covered the cage with an old bit of calico. Then he set it on the cart, and laid the cashmere, the riband, and the receipt down on the bench under the plane-tree.

"There they all are, my dear. You'll never have such another friend as Pietro, in all your days, and when you get a baby next year, Pietro will stand for him at the font," he said, with fatherly tenderness; then he shook the donkey awake, and the little rusty wheels of the cart began to turn and creak. "Zi-Zi! Zi-Zi!" came plaintively and uneasily from the covered cage, in tremulous oft repeated notes. Lula stood with her face buried in her hands, she could not bear to see, she could not bear to hear; sobs shook her frame from head to foot. She had bartered love for money.

The cart soon passed out of view through the sunshine, over the white dust.

The linnets and wood-larks were all chirping; the bees were humming, the pigeons were cooing; but to Lula it seemed as though a great silence had fallen on the place.

Little Zi-Zi was going away,—away—away—she did not even know where. She felt as if she had killed some little innocent thing. There were the black cashmere, the lace, the riband, everything she had desired so passionately for so many months; she would go to her wedding in due wedding garments, and they had cost her nothing; and she tried to be glad; tried to laugh and look at the stuff, and think of how bravely she would appear at the church in the eyes of the other girls. But it was of no use; she could not see her treasures for the tears that rained from her eyes, and she knew she had done a greedy, a mean, and a cruel thing. Thrice she started from her seat to run after and overtake the pedlar's cart, which she could have done, for she was fleet of foot, and knew his route. But each time she sat down again, overcome by the false shame of looking foolish in the old man's eyes, and by the longing, still in her, to be suitably arrayed upon her marriage day.

Yet she was wretched.

"Zi-Zi! Oh, Zi-Zi!" she moaned.

There she sat alone in the sunshine, where never more would the little red-breasted, black-capped, merry friend flutter and twitter about her under the leaves.

"What have you done with Zi-Zi?" asked her father when he came home.

And when she told him he was silent. But one of her brothers said roughly :

"Was there ever aught like a woman for loving herself? Hang me if I would have sold little Zi-Zi; no, not to have tobacco and wine all the year round for nothing."

"A blackcap for a black gown," said the younger lad, making the same poor joke that the pedlar had made : "Well, we'll never have a bird whistle as Zi-Zi whistled. I could hear his note half a mile off, and I'd swear to it out of ten thousand."

And Lula knew that they all of them condemned her.



She could not bear to look at the old oak chest where his cage had always stood.

That evening Hugo walked over from the old grange where he lived, and espied the empty cage, where Zi-Zi at that hour was always to be seen, a little ball of russet plumage, at roost on his perch.

"Have you lost the little bird?" he enquired, anxiously.

Lula shook her head, with the tears gathering afresh in her eyes; her voice failed her.

"She's sold him to get her *corredo,*" said her father, gruffly. "Of course it's right and well enough, he was her own; but I feel as if the luck of the house had gone with little Zi-Zi."

"Sold him? Who would buy him at any price big enough to get a gown?" said Hugo in astonishment.

"Some foreigner, they're always three parts daft," said the older man, impatiently. "Sure as you live my mother sold an old battered pan to one of them; it had always served for the pigeons' water, and nobody thought naught of it, and the foreigner paid it ten times its weight in gold, because of somebody who he said had modelled it; they are always picking up dirt like that; they don't know any better."

"What did you get for Zi-Zi?" Hugo enquired, turning to his betrothed.

But she threw her apron over her head, and got up from the table, and ran away into the open air and the evening shadows.

"She got her black gown," said her father. "I wouldn't have done it myself to get a black coat, or twenty black coats. But, Lord! you know what women are, when they have a bit of finery in their heads. They'd sell themselves and all belonging to 'em."

"I will get her another bird," said Hugo, "but I am sorry."

"I think the luck of the house is gone with him," said the old man, "and you may be sure that mean rogue Pietrino has made a rare profit on it. If the child had waited till one of us had come in, 'twould have been better."

"Aye, it would; we could have gone with him and seen what he did get. To give a whole gown for a little blackcap!—Saints above us!

—and he isn't a man to give anything without getting three times as much again for himself."

The discovery that a gold mine had been with them in the tiny form of the little bullfinch stupified all the men; these pretty songsters were netted, or shot, or bird-limed all around them, only to furnish a mouthful at a feast-day meal. They knew nothing of rich people and their fancies, and the prices which were paid for them.

"Anyhow I am sorry the little chap is gone," said Hugo, as he looked again at the empty cage. "I always thought he'd bring us luck. I heard him piping the first time I stopped my beasts by these cross-roads and saw Lula's face in the doorway."

And then he went outside the house, and tried to console Lula, who was sitting on the bench crying still as if her heart would break.

But she had her black gown, and had to make it, and it took up all her leisure, and some of her working hours. So that, for the first time in her short life, the bread she made was heavy, and the cottage was ill swept, and the cabbage soup simmered itself all away, and when the men came home, nothing was ready for them.

"The devil take your gown," said her father more than once.

If the cashmere gown had only been rolls of notes, and if she had only known whither the bird was gone, so great was her remorse, that she would have taken the money and begged for Zi-Zi back again. But to do this was impossible; in her haste and confusion, in her greed and regret, she had not thought to make the pedlar tell her where those rich folks dwelt. Perhaps at some villa on the plains, perhaps in some one of the little towns, perhaps in the city itself of which on fine days she could see the crosses on the cathedral domes, shining in the blue haze under those far-off mountains. She could not tell; in her haste to possess the black gown, she had let her little friend pass away from her into the vast unknown; and she could not trace him.

As she sat and stitched at the woollen stuff whose dye blackened her fingers, and whose folds fell about her like a funeral pall, she could not bear to see the thrushes flying amongst the vines, and hear the autumn-singing birds chirp and warble in the fields. It was so like Zi-Zi, and

yet so unlike! And then when morning dawned, there was no little twitter at her ear to wake her, no tapping against the window-glass to greet the sunrise.

"I wish, dear, you'd gone without the gown," said Hugo. "I should have liked little Zi-Zi always singing about my place; it is a poor place, he'd have made it bright."

"We can get other birds," said Lula quickly, and crossly.

She could not bring herself to confess that she regretted what she had done, and that the memory of the little bird was always with her, haunting her restlessly, ceaselessly, darkening into what was almost remorse the blithe days of her betrothal time.

In a fortnight from the day of his sale, the wedding-gown was finished; made very stiff with whalebone and buckram, and disfiguring the slim, supple, childlike figure of her very greatly, and suiting ill her round, cherubic face, and her tanned and rosy skin.

But it was a black gown; the garment which custom required, and she was proud to think that anybody who had ever known her in her short life, would see her arrayed in it. And yet she hated the sight of it where it lay in the chest with some powdered iris root to sweeten it, and the blessed palm of the past Easter laid upon it, to bring it good fortune.

Once she walked to where old Pietro lived; it was a dusty, ugly little village several miles off, and she was tired when she got to it, and the old man was out on his rounds and was not expected back for two days. No one could tell her anything about the bird, but some women of the house he lodged at said he had seemed flush of money that week. Lula went home with a heavy heart.

"I will get you another to-morrow, my girl," said Hugo, with his arm about her, under the porch.

"No, not another, never another," said Lula passionately. "He loved me, oh, he did love me, Hugo. I was a wicked wretch, a vain fool, to send him away to get my gown. But I could not bear the women to laugh at me and see me go to the church with you in a shabby old frock!"

"Thy frock didn't matter," said Hugo. "But don't sob so about it.

I daresay the little bird will be as merry there as he was here; they must be rich folks who have got him, or they wouldn't have paid such a sight of money. Cheer up, my lass."

But Lula was not to be comforted. The sense of some crime committed weighed on her wherever she was.

She knew that her *damo* was right, and that it would have been better to have done without it.

The day she had put the last stitch to it, and laid it there with the palm and the iris powder, was a fine sunshiny vintage day, the grapes were being gathered all over the plain, and the laughter of the boys and girls, and the creak of the waggon wheels, and now and then the glad bark of a dog, came to her from the fields. For the first time in her life she was not out under the vines, skipping, laughing, wrestling, playing with the rest under the maple boughs and the vine leaves. She was alone with her black gown, troubled and anxious, because one of the girls who lived nearer the town had told her she had cut the waist too long and the skirt too full to be like what they now wore in the streets.

Suddenly she heard a voice which called her name; it was that of Pietro the pedlar.

She started and sighed as she heard it; it was hateful to her.

"What can he want with me?" she wondered. "He gave me a clear receipt in full; he cannot come for any money."

But apprehensive, perplexed, and reluctant, she went out of the doorway, and saw the old man and the little long cart, just as she had seen them fifteen days before when she had sold Zi-Zi, only in the shafts of the cart there was a pony in place of the old grey donkey.

"Lula, will you come along with me?" said the pedlar. "The rich folks that bought Zi-Zi want you."

All the blood in her body seemed to leap into Lula's face.

"Oh, my Zi-Zi, my Zi-Zi!" she cried, with a deep sob. "Is he well? Is he happy?"

"Oh, aye," said the old man hastily; "but—but—he won't sing, and nothing will do for the lady that has him but to fetch you and see

if you can make him sing. You'll come, won't you? Of course I have been paid for him, and it doesn't matter to me, but Pietrino is always a man of honour, and having sold him for a singing bird, a piping blackcap, why, you see—"

"Oh, I knew he would be wretched," said Lula, with a wailing cry. "How I hate you—how I hate you—oh, why did I listen to you, and take your stuff that day? It is half cotton, and dyed so badly, and is coarse, not the least, they tell me, what they wear in the town."

"You are an ungrateful hussy," said the old man, "and I have a mind to drag the brass ear-rings out of your ears. If you are so fond of your Zi-Zi, come and see him, and get him to sing."

"But is it very far? You would not tell me where."

"It is ten miles off. But I've said I'll take you, and I'll take you. Pietrino's word is his bond."

"But my father—"

"I passed your father on the road, and I told him I was coming for you. Throw a shawl about your head, and get up beside me—quick."

"Is Zi-Zi ill?"

"Well, he isn't over well. You'll cure him if you come."

Lula sprang into the cart. Her heart was sick, and her conscience was heavy laden.

Pietro banged on to the poor pony with a heavy stick, and it started off at a quick pace; they rolled over the stones and the dust, under the reddening leaves of the pollard maples. The pedlar never spoke a word, he was full of apprehension lest Lula should learn that he had received no less than eighty francs for poor Zi-Zi. But he had had no choice but to seek her out, for the servants of the great foreign house had threatened him with breaking every bone in his body if he did not fetch the girl and make the bird sing.

Zi-Zi, when he had first been released from darkness, and seen the light, the flowers, and the fountains around him, had burst into a flood of song, rapturous and far-reaching; so that the lady who wanted him had said hastily to the people :

"Pay the man who brought him anything he asks, and let him go."

But that one song ended he had sung no more, he had broken off in the midst of the *Nel silenzio,* and looking uneasily about him, had called Zi-Zi! Zi-Zi! with agitation, and had realised that he was in a strange place, and that she whom he loved was not near him.

They had never been able to induce him to sing again, and day by day he had pined and drooped a little more, and a little more. The lady had accused the servants of tampering with him, the servants had sought out the pedlar, and said to him :

"Make the bird sing as he sang when he came, or we will make you disgorge every farthing you received."

"I can't make him sing," the old man had said angrily. "'Tis only the girl who reared him can do that."

"Well, bring the girl," had said the servants, and so he had come, borrowing a stout pony to put in the shafts instead of his feeble donkey, for the way was long between the cottage at the cross-roads and the great house.

He was angered and apprehensive. He had gained eighty francs by Zi-Zi, and he could not be sure that when the girl should speak with the servants this fact would not come out against himself.

The drive was long and tedious, and frightened her; she had never been so far out over the plains in her life, she did not know where she was, and she was afraid of the crafty, ugly old man, whose usual loquacity was stilled, and who only grumbled a few bad words every now and then, when the pony stumbled into a rut, or jolted over a stone in the road.

Pietro was thinking all the time :

"If she should find out I had eighty francs?"

But one fear casts out another, and the servant who had paid him in the lady's name, had said to him : "If your bird does not sing, I will break every bone in your old yellow skin."

So he had sought for her.

The stout pony jogged on through the sunshiny width of the plains, all green and golden with vines, and passed farms and villages and churches,

and wooded places, and at last drew near a great house in the midst of great gardens, such as Lula had never dreamed could be so near her, and yet so far from her.

Her heart beat thickly with terror and relief; Pietro had done her no harm, but she was brought into a strange and terrifying place.

"Oh, my Zi-Zi, my Zi-Zi!" she murmured, with a lump in her throat.

They went through avenues and past fish-ponds, and under terraces, and the scene was gorgeous and amazing to the ignorance of the girl, and a great shyness and a paralysis of fear came on her, and her tongue seemed riven close to the roof of her mouth, and her heart felt cold as ice.

She was confused and hardly sensible of what she did or where they took her, when she got down alone before a vast white shining house, and was led by a lackey through a succession of rooms such as she had never dreamed of in her visions of paradise, and which she saw in a whirl of strange colours, dancing and swaying before her eyes.

At the end of the rooms was a glass-house, full of flowering trees, with a fountain playing in their midst, and a strange voice said to her:

"There is your bird. Make him sing. He has never sung for us."

Then she saw, amongst many-hued flowers of strange shape, a golden cage, or one which looked of gold to her, and on the perch of it sat huddled up a little ball of feathers with its small black head sunk down into its breast.

With a shrill cry Lula sprang forwards to it, and opened the door of the cage:

"Zi-Zi!" she cried. "He is dying! Oh, he is dying! Zi-Zi! Zi-Zi! don't you know Lula, Zi-Zi?"

The little bird lifted its drooping head, and a tremor ran through it like a sigh; its dulled eyes brightened, its wings fluttered, it flew out of the cage, and lit on the girl's shoulder.

"My Zi-Zi! Oh, my Zi-Zi!" she cried, with the tears coursing down her cheeks.

"Make him sing," said the voices round her.

She took him in her hand, and he fluttered to her lips, and pecked at them with joy, wildly fluttering his wings in a passion of ecstasy.

Then his little black head fell back, his wings drooped motionless, his eyes clouded; he would never sing any more.

His little heart had broken under the burden of its love.

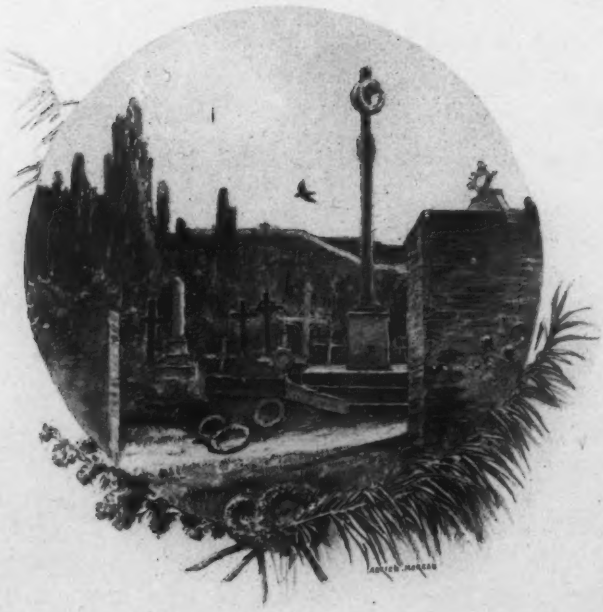
The black gown bought by Zi-Zi's death was worn on Lula's wedding day, and it was worn once more a year later, when she perished in child-birth, and they dressed her in it as in a shroud.

They laid her in the common ground, which every few years was emptied of its bones, and filled afresh with newer dead.

In the shadows of the summer evenings a little bird was often seen fluttering above the nameless cross of wood, which alone marked her burial place.

"Look! It is Zi-Zi," said the people, with hushed breath.

OUIDA.



JACOB MARIS THE PAINTER



If it should ever happen that, like Atlantis, Holland were to be engulfed by the waves that continually beat upon her shores, carrying away with them annually a few feet of coast, there would still remain to us in a painter's work that is disseminated in every corner of the civilized globe, a vision of what this little country had been. Holland, famous during the splendid luxuriance of a century and a half that was crowned by the advent of Rembrandt, fell into a period of artistic sterility which has lasted until these latter days.

In the world of letters a Multatuli, in painting an Israels, a Maris, and a Mauve were needed to lighten the heavy palette and illumine all things with their penetrating, subtle, grand, or homely feeling; in a word, by the light of modern thought.

To speak of Jacob Maris out of Holland is no easy matter. This great artist is too little known (barring the painters who are able to appreciate him) to be brought within the reader's cognizance by the mere mention of one or the other of his works.

While, in France, Israels or Mesdag have acquired a certain notoriety, the public have no adequate conception of the standing of Jacob Maris, although he is far from being their inferior.

If like Munkacsy, Sargent, or Stewart, Paris were his habitat, his works would already be sought for by the more distinguished amateurs and connoisseurs. But as he only puts in an occasional appearance at the annual *Salon,* where his delicate talent is swamped by the surrounding mediocrities, he is as yet but little known; insufficiently so for the popularization of an artist of his calibre.

Besides, despite his immense talent, a talent that is beyond the comprehension of the general public, Maris long passed unnoticed even in Holland. It is only during the last ten years that this master is beginning to be accepted by his countrymen, who, it must be confessed, have hitherto lagged behind in the intellectual movement that is astir in Europe.

The literary and artistic evolution, which in France dates at least thirty years back, is quite recent in Holland.

In 1850, while Millet was painting the "Sower," while Corot and Rousseau were in the flush of their talent, while the Goncourts were publishing their *En 18——,* while Flaubert was meditating *Madame Bovary,* Holland remained immersed in the singular torpor, whose traces are not yet obliterated, that followed upon the Revolution. A strange period, that half-century of anti-artistic somnolence that is characterised by an almost absolute lack of artistic work; not one true painter, not a sculptor, nor an architect, not a piece of furniture, nor even a toy that had style! And this after the superb blossoming of the last three centuries in Spain, France, and the Netherlands.

After this epoch, the decadence set in during the eighteenth century in Holland earlier than elsewhere. From 1750 to 1860 there is no trace of an artist of any fibre, not one artistic temperament revealed itself.



Pictures, novels, verses, all were weighted with those rigid traditions that paralyse all enthusiasm as well as every personal impression. Verses were correct in form, with the frigid coldness of contemporary paintings, correct with the correctness that signed itself Schelfhout or Koekkoek in the corner of certain landscapes; poetry and painting were bloodless and abortive, and without meaning to either eye or mind. It was a stagnation and an apathy as gloomy as the void.

During the ten years which intervened between 1850 and 1860, vague echoes from Paris came to awaken the more sensitive spirits. Ary Scheffer, who had almost become a Frenchman, was domiciled in Paris. Thither went Israels, to pass several years of his life. A gleam, the first stir of life, began to dawn. Israels frequented the studio of Picot, the Louvre, and artistic society. His palette brightened and lost the bituminous tints of the preceding epoch. This was the beginning of the modern Dutch renaissance. Just as the sun, before appearing in the horizon, projects a faint ray which gradually grows and rises until we are dazzled by it, so was artistic perception slowly evolved until it gained the splendid height it commands at the present moment.

Little Holland can now boast a great number of talented painters, besides masters of unrivalled merit. Among the latter, Jacob Maris is one of the most potent. His artistic fibre is remarkable, while he unites an unerring technique to an exquisite delicacy of conception. These rare gifts have naturally placed him, with Israels and the lamented Mauve, at the head of the national school, so that his name has at length acquired real prestige. Having now defined the place he holds in his own country, we will, after a few personal notes, endeavour to define the one he is destined to hold in the school of painting of the nineteenth century.

* * *

In 1850, there lived at The Hague a humble printer, who had hard work to bring up his three sons and two daughters. The eldest, Jacob Maris, was the first to begin to paint, but in the interval of a few years his two brothers developed an ardent love of painting, and at the present moment, all three are artists who have attained high rank in subtle and

refined art. The personality of each is marked and decided, and is further distinguished by absence of all similarity between their respective paintings. Among their early studies, the drawings executed at the age of twelve, those by Willem strike one as bearing a certain likeness to those by Jacob; those by Matthijs have no resemblance to either. From his eleventh year, the latter's drawings are marked by a mannerism that does not characterize the work of his brothers. While their work is serious and extraordinarily conscientious, Matthijs, although he imbued his studies with great variety of expression, always kept a little outside nature. His original temperament, with its vague tint of mysticism, is already perceptible even from his earliest childhood upwards.

But from the moment that each one wielded the brush, each brother chose a line of his own. He separated himself from the others, and wended his own way unhesitatingly, with the faith and conviction of which strength is born.

Willem Maris paints sunny landscapes with animals, generally in a cross-light, for he is a true colourist,—meadows of tender verdure and of irreproachable truthfulness to nature, glittering in the morning dew. Sometimes cows, white, black, or red, make a blot of rich colour, at others a brood of ducks, in which the painter excels, light upon the riverside, among the weeds and rushes, whose bright, cheerful, or sombre greens make deep shadows in the water. The limpidity, freshness, and brilliancy of these reflections have a rare charm. And all these things are painted with a most delicious ease and mastery of touch.

Matthijs Maris is an artist of the highest order, differing absolutely in every detail from his two brothers. There are those who place him above any of his countrymen, and aver that he is first among Dutch painters.

The man and his life are of monastic simplicity. He left his country in his youth. After a long sojourn in Paris, he settled down in London. All his world is contained within his studio; he seldom leaves it; he works day and night, lives on nothing, and knows nothing of life, society, or woman. He is cognizant of nothing outside his own exalted creations. His refinement, his exquisite and immaterial subtlety recall Schumann. At fifteen he painted studies of heads and still-life that



remind one of those painted by the greatest among the Old Masters. Mesdag possesses a head of a ram by him that is as fine as a Rembrandt. We have seen a study of still-life which he painted at sixteen that is worthy of Van der Helst.

Since he has attained the full measure of his power he paints both figure and landscape. An inveterate seeker after perfection, he is never satisfied with his productions. His smallest works,—and they are very rare,—cost him the labour of several years; his vague landscapes, that are bathed in the mist of dreams, are of tender and exquisite feeling. One of our greatest painters once said of him that "this was no longer painting." Certain it is that it is the rarest art and poetry. His subtleties of touch and feeling remind one of a poem by Shelley or a *lied* by Heine.

Some of his landscapes are animated by figures; little pages, or golden-haired maidens, or a Perdita, figures of *A Winter's Tale* that are adorably young and virginal.

At other times, and especially of late, his figures are larger. He paints heads and even portraits of inexpressible charm; and this, be it noted, in a manner peculiar to himself which has no relation to any ancient or modern painter. His faces, true reveries, are dreamy, strange, mysterious, entrancing, and immaterial.

An art critic, M. Jules Destrée, has appreciated him so adequately that we cannot attempt to define his style as well as he has done.

"Matthijs Maris," he says, "imbues his works with somewhat of the illimitable. They take long to understand, and one is never certain of having quite apprehended them. They are rather suggestive than descriptive; their value lies in the enigma they present to us and in the endless web of possible answers which they propound. Unexpected and unusual, the myriad hypotheses, vague ideas, and emotions they engender are as variable and changing as the clouds of his skies. Such are certain indefinable sensations that are produced by music. If we but lose ourselves in these reveries, they rapidly assume the profound significance of symbols; such are the impressions they synthetize, and the ideas their images embody. Maris is, in this exalted sense, more than a painter; he is an artist."

Being the worker he is, he could not fail to be tempted by the etcher's needle. So one day he undertook a full-size reproduction of Millet's "Sower." He began by small sketches and a few studies, marvellous little gray, velvety pages. After a full year's arduous labour, Matthijs Maris printed some of his own proofs, refining and perfecting his plates to the utmost; then he achieved one of the finest engravings of the century. So masterly is the reproduction of Millet's work, so remarkable is its rendering, that we venture to affirm that perhaps no picture has ever been interpreted with finer feeling or *maestria*. It is to be regretted that this work, of which a very small number of proofs are extant, is extremely rare.

Matthijs Maris never exhibits. He works but for himself, indifferent to aught but his work, his sole aim in life is to express those impressions he has apprehended in so personal a manner. As we have already said, he is not easily understood, because he is an artist whose impressions are shared by few. His admirers are the more ardent because they are comparatively few in number.

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Jacob Maris was born in 1840. From his early youth upwards he was irresistibly impelled to reproduce in pencil all that he saw around him. He attended the Communal school till the age of twelve, drawing in recess time everything he saw, from still-life to the portraits of his father and mother.

His schoolmaster, astounded at the aptitude of young Maris, and foreseeing in him a great painter of the future, recommended him warmly to M. Stroebel, an artist who then enjoyed a certain celebrity and who painted interiors in the style of Pieter de Hooghe. At his request Jacob was received as a pupil in the studio of this painter and commenced a course of serious study. The tasks which were set him were the copying of Robert's lithographs, prints of the day, in black and white crayons on tinted paper.

But the labour which was of most service to him was the continual production of still-life water-colours, often ordinary commonplace objects.

He painted them from morning to night, and perhaps that accounts for the origin of the unrivalled dexterity of the water-colour work he now produces.

After some years of study under Stroebel, a picture-dealer in league with Louis Meyer,—the Dutch Gudin,—persuaded little Jacob (who was then about fifteen) to become a pupil of Huib van Hove. He was a painter who taught about a dozen pupils in an old chapel that he had converted into a studio. He worked assiduously but was not there long, before some stroke of ill-luck obliged Huib van Hove to leave his native town and take refuge in Antwerp, whither he was followed by Jacob Maris.

It was at Antwerp that he began to live the life of a studio-fag. His master, instead of encouraging the development of his natural gifts, employed him in the preparation of his own canvases and even in that of his own studies. He absorbed him so completely that, when Maris asked for permission to attend the Academy lectures, van Hove refused to grant it. This caused a breach between master and pupil, after which Maris attended the Antwerp drawing school for three years without interruption.

After this course of study, Maris returned to The Hague and entered the studio of Louis Meyer, rather as an apprentice than as a pupil. He cleaned brushes, mixed paints, and cut out paper sea-gulls, which the painter was in the habit of pinning carefully to his canvas so that he might judge of the place to paint them in the picture.

It goes without saying that the young artist did not content himself with these labours, but that he was thrilled with the desire to rise to a higher plane. Therefore, whenever he had a chance he applied himself to painting by himself, and it was in this manner that, in his leisure moments which were, so to speak, stolen ones, he painted the first picture which attracted public attention. This canvas, which represented an interior, with a cook at work, is still in the collection of M. Trossarello, his first patron. It was a great step for Maris; he had sold a picture, his artistic career was about to begin.

Soon after, in 1865, he left with his friend Kaemmerer for Paris. Once there, he confined himself to figure painting, chiefly after Italian

models, and just managed to keep himself. He passed one year in the studio of Hébert, a painter of cold but distinguished elegance. Hébert considered Maris's studies "superb as to colour," but he reproached his pupil with want of technique. He considered his figures heavy, and advised him to fine them down and to endow them with delicacy and grace.

By degrees Maris turned his attention to landscape. At the Salon of 1868 he exhibited a "View of the Rhine," which attracted attention and was purchased by a London picture dealer. By this time he was launched, and fortune began to smile on him when the Franco-German war broke out, bringing in its train the sad days of the Commune.

Jacob Maris was already the father of a family, and times were hard for him as for so many others, during the siege. He had, however, settled down in Paris, and there was no possibility of suddenly abandoning all he possessed; he therefore stayed to share the privations of other artists, his comrades. The winter was so severe that he was obliged to burn the banisters of his dwelling for firewood, and he was in such straits that one day when his eldest little daughter was ill, he had to make broth for the child of her three pet canaries.

In 1869, Jacob Maris sent for his brother Matthijs. The latter, after belonging to the National Guard during the war and narrowly escaping the perils of the Commune, very nearly fell a victim to the army of Versailles. However, his brother Jacob succeeded in saving him.

When the terrible year was over, Jacob Maris returned to Holland with his family. Dutch landscapes so attracted him that he settled at The Hague, where he and his continue to live to this day, surrounded by the high esteem of his *confrères*.

* * *

Artist life in Holland is very different to what it is in Paris or London. Artists live in their own homes in the simplest manner, almost in seclusion, and the only club of which they are members is an artistic one, which they seldom visit. Isolated within their studio walls, their existence is a tranquil one, void of exterior emotions.



The house inhabited by Jacob Maris is situated at the extreme end of the town, in a quiet neighbourhood. In front is a wide stretch of unbroken country. It is this lack of suburbs that makes The Hague so charming a summer city; you turn a street that appears to be in the heart of the town, and suddenly you find yourself in the woods, on the downs, or in the meadows that, like an emerald zone, surround The Hague.

No sooner have you mounted the stairs that lead to the first floor than the plain house, that can scarcely be distinguished from its neighbours, betrays the personality which inhabits it. A drawing-room carpeted with costly rugs that throw out a fine glow of colour, Delft ware and pale gilded Satzumas, cheerful old coppers hanging among pictures, gifts and studies of his friends and brothers, and the indescribable power, vigour, and refinement of the general harmony recall the painter's own palette. You raise a *portière* of antique, oriental tissue, lined with tawny or blue-green Gobelins, and you enter the master's sanctuary. The same Gobelins tapestries form a background to the further end of the studio against which the easels, bearing works in process of painting, stand out in relief. On the right, in juxtaposition to the tapestry, glimmers the gold of the old goffered leathers. The varied richness of all these tones forms an appropriate setting for the vigorous work of the master. Like the canvases of Rembrandt and of all true colourists, they need no foil.

We note in passing that the studio, as it is in Paris—a vast hall with a gigantic bay window,—can hardly be said to exist in Holland. Dutch artists, who in all things follow the traditions of their ancestors, simply arrange a studio in their house,—a room with a good light,—by placing therein a little furniture and a few easels.

In a studio some twenty-five feet long, the master works unceasingly. An early riser, he begins at eight o'clock, and may sometimes be found in the evening, retouching his canvas by the light of a gas-lamp. Ever searching after perfection in proportion, as in the masses of light and shadow, he reconstructs or demolishes what he has passed the day in painting, remodelling the composition of his simplest work until he is absolutely satisfied with it. Yet all his works are designed with a vigorous logic that hides itself under the appearance of spontaneous feeling.

One day Paul Soleillet, the African explorer, a man who has seen and known so many men, averred that the Dutch possessed a remarkable quality that was becoming rare, to wit, good sense. This quality Jacob Maris possesses in an eminent degree. His good sense is absolute and perfect. The logic which is the basis of his works, the perfect balance of light and shade, surely this is honest art, supreme good sense! And when the painter talks of his art, how this broad and potent good sense prevails! With what justice he discusses his own canvases! And never a decisive stroke of the brush that is not absolutely voluntary. He always obeys an intellectual impetus,—we mean a mentally personal one,—but he never trusts to his emotions, a curious blending of passion and deliberation!

We visited him recently while he was painting one of those effects of cross-light, flooded with sun, that an artist seldom cares to part with. A burning sun illumined a luscious sward, the green of whose every blade was of luminous transparence.

"Yes," said Maris, "here is one of those effects that are too often rendered with dryness and pallor in tone in the belief that that will make them light. Had one but a little light instead of white on one's palette, all the requisite conditions would be there. But as the most brilliant light can only be produced by a little white and a little yellow ochre, we must perforce transpose the tone of the grasses, and make them warm, velvety, and luscious, giving the relative value without attempting to produce the effect of light by means of a washed-out lightness."

Here again his fine good sense inspired him with so cogent an argument.

* * *

Jacob Maris has never, like so many other painters, speculated on the sentimentalism of a subject. Not one of his works betrays any of those shortcomings that are induced by striving after commonplace success. Ever, and above all, he is a thoroughly conscientious painter, one who paints disinterestedly, for the love of producing a fine, living, complete, really artistic work.

Thus, while he has often painted children,—his own,—what attracts him

in them is the delicacy of the flesh-tints, the rose-pinks of the skin, the blonde silkiness of the hair, the daintiness of form, and the whiteness of their garb,—all this enhanced by a striking note of red or blue, a bow, a toy, or fruit. Exquisitely does he paint childhood, the immaculate purity of its youthful colouring, and that velvety freshness that is like nothing but the down of a peach.

This it is that renders his work so attractive, the feeling, the perfect apprehension of the subject treated. There is never the suspicion of an anecdote in these pictures of children; the subjects are of the utmost simplicity, a baby in a high chair, a little maiden seated holding a book in her hand, and with a dreamy look in her eyes, or a little boy playing the violin. But what pure naïve grace these studies breathe, and how admirably depicted, how delicately harmonious is their scheme of colour!

As a landscape painter, he has painted the multitudinous, varied, changing effects of a country where the rural aspect varies more than anywhere else. A true Dutch painter, his artistic type is that of his glorious ancestors, of a Rembrandt or a Van der Meer. Taken as a whole, his work as a landscape painter is tinged with sweet melancholy, inherent calmness, and a profound peace that is exempt from monotonousness, impressions peculiar to the country he loves and inhabits.

None beside him have so expressed the meaning of these words of Baudelaire :

Les ciels bas et lourds,
Les soleils brouillés
De ces ciels mouillés,

Les soleils couchants
Revêtent les champs,
Les canaux, la ville entière,
D'hyacinthe et d'or;
Le monde s'endort
Dans une chaude lumière.

No other painter, either ancient or modern, has so thoroughly apprehended and rendered with such sincerity, innate feeling, and true sentiment the diverse ethereal aspects, bathed in a luminous atmosphere, or floating in blond mists, of fair Holland, so admirable to the painter's eye, Holland,

whose essential characteristics are infinite horizons melting into cloudy skies, the pink moistness of the soil, fresh and luscious foliage, and a grey, luminous, silvery atmosphere that has nothing in common with the opaqueness of rainy English days, nor the heaviness of Paris skies, nor the harshness of southern ones.

One needs to have witnessed rainy weather in Provence or Algiers, at times when the earth turns a dirty yellow, and the skies are heavy and false in tone, to adequately appreciate the beauty of the grey seasons in Holland. Every country can boast its special effects of light. To southern lands or the Mediterranean appertains the blue that in the Netherlands is wont to be harsh and unpleasing, while Holland's rainy atmosphere, of a pearly harmony and exquisite lightness, is absolutely delicious in tone.

These essential characteristics of Dutch landscape are unchanging, and will always lend her a special charm. But that which changes and becomes modified there, as all the world over, is the picturesque quaintness of buildings and monuments, and even of the landscape itself. For instance, on the edge of those marshes that used to be peopled by myriads of birds, which only fishing-boats, few and far between, ever broke in upon, there now tower steam-mills and factories. All that pleases the artistic eye, old suburbs, tumble-down hovels, tinted by the mould and the moss that devour them, by the many seasons that have left their traces behind them, and by the successive daubing of their various tenants, all those things are gradually disappearing to make way for regular hives of downright ugly workmen's dwellings built to measure. Some villages in the heart of the provinces and old dead-alive provincial towns, that are removed from the centres of communication, still preserve their picturesque character.

Holland, whither journey in summer many French, English, American, and German painters in search of the picturesque and of remnants of past times, is undergoing a modernizing change. Yet a few years, and the windmills will be no more, those superb centenarian or bi-centenarian windmills, whose sails are covered with red or yellow cloth, delicious bits of colour, softened by a grey bronze varnish through which glow warm patches of a worn brick tint, those famous windmills with balconies that serve for the disposal and guidance of wings and sails. And the wooden



drawbridges, curious and lumbering constructions, that used to be painted a warm white or daubed with tar, are now replaced by meagre little wrought iron bridges.

It is of this fair Holland that is about to disappear that the work of Jacob Maris gives us so synthetic a vision. For he already lived and studied in the times when these last vestiges of other days yet existed, before the advent of steam. Inasmuch as he has found an old wall quainter and more "amusing" to paint than a new one (there are those who may dub romanticism what is but a sense of the picturesque) Maris has painted and will continue to paint it in preference to a cold, colourless, and monotonous modern building. This alone would suffice to make his work interesting and to endow it with a peculiar charm.

* * *

The method of Jacob Maris is of extreme simplicity; both in oils and water-colours his palette is that of a true colourist, ochres, yellow and burnt, and blue; he never attempts to give character to his work by dint of tricks or expedients. Although he often repaints the same canvas, he never uses the impasting of his paint by glazing it over for the representation of divers substances as, for instance, stone, wood, or water. He scrapes it all off with the knife and paints it freshly in again at a stroke. And this freshness of execution becomes more and more marked in his later work. Besides, he has a horror of tricky or *chic* painting, which aims at assuming a distinction which but helps to betray its poorness of fibre.

He has no love of paintings that are made after certain formulas to suit the market. When he is not working at a picture he busies himself with sketches of still-life; they are of mighty workmanship and brilliant colour; a dish that amateurs would consider fit to set before a king. But the conscientious artist never permits them to leave his studio, because according to him they are unfinished works, and he holds that no picture should be exhibited to the public until it has expressed all it has to say. These superb sketches serve as a preparation for works of entirely different character. He abhors the insipid coldness of a grey or yellowish ground, he needs a luminous and brilliant background, even if it has no

relation to the projected picture, to attain to what Edmond de Goncourt has so aptly defined as "the little fever of the brain," so that he may tune his scheme of colour to the same key.

The workmanship of Jacob Maris bears the unmistakeable stamp of his personality. In the beginning of his career it is somewhat meagre. Later on, as far as ten years back, the strokes of his brush are flat and thick, occasionally producing heavy impasting by dint of much painting over; the texture of this epoch is thick, rich, and brilliant. Insensibly his manner changes. While he puts more atmosphere in his pictures, he gives more expression to every stroke. The workmanship meanwhile becomes more nervous and intense; the clear, hard stroke is now soft and undefined, as if the brush were wiped backwards, crushed violently against the canvas, lining and seaming the solid impasto. The strokes of this same brush are more direct and expressive in the flaked play of colour, modelling, as it were, in the mass, and rendering the varied objects with marvellous power; in a word, thus making them stand out from the canvas and lending them a life of their own.

Dutch painters work quite as much in water-colours as in oil, but they employ a very different process to the French or English ones. Instead of bestowing a light and transparent wash on an almost immaculate surface, they vigorously manipulate their paper, washing it with a soaking sponge, wiping it with rag, scratching its surface, scarcely wetting the brushes they lay upon it, so that by dint of a variety of expedients they succeed in avoiding the appearance of painted paper and the ridges of colour induced by drying. It is obvious that by this means they obtain more tone. By the practice of this intricate method, Dutch water-colour painters attain immense vigour, power of expression, and warmth of colour. In this wise Maris produces such truly remarkable works that they can no longer be considered as fugitive or volatile impressions. By mixing his liquid colour with an infinitesimal fraction of body-colour the tones blend and refine each other, and the painting assumes the most delicate harmonies in softened white, dull greens, and warm greys; a scheme of colour at once powerful and deliciously vague. There are those who consider these works dark and gloomy; while on the contrary they express much more ambient light



than do any canvases of the whity, washed-out school. If the artist would have the radiance of a supreme brilliancy, a dazzling light, a luminous ray, the brightness of a sky, the polish of a shining object, he transposes his tones to the necessary key, a key inherent to his temperament as a colourist, and he tones them down, without ever allowing them to become black or poor in colour. Let us imagine a pewter dish resting on a white cloth. To harmonise the brightness of the burnished metal with the whiteness of the cloth, he would transpose the value of the latter to a lower tone, to a more intense and a slightly tinted one which, were it to be seen alone, would appear greyish. In this manner he would render the brilliant light of the metal. And then naturally the entire scale of colour must be subordinated to this supreme light; every tone is transposed in exact proportion to the white (its vividness being toned down), and the general scheme of colour thus acquires an exquisite refinement while the colours lose nothing of their warmth.

If we will omit nothing, we must needs add that Jacob Maris has on rare occasions plied the engraver's needle with extraordinary ability. The proofs drawn from his plates are unequalled, and are extremely rare. The freshness of execution which characterizes his paintings is not less striking in these engravings, which are mostly studies of heads or little landscapes, now and then an old bridge with a few houses, a mill, or an evening effect.

The lightness, facility, and sureness of touch, which render them comparable only to the sketches of Rembrandt or Dürer, characterize these marvels of delicate expression. Strokes that are dashed in with a nonchalance that is certain of the result firmly define the *ensemble,* and while they dally with the plate indicate details without lessening the effect of the whole. These little proofs, drawn on paper that is too white with ink that is too black, by an inexperienced printer, are precious gems unknown to collectors and only to be met with in the portfolio of the Artists' Club, at The Hague.

* * *

There is a singularity which denotes the synthetic standpoint from which Maris paints. He scarcely ever paints a theme or subject exactly as he has seen it, because naturally he finds here a line that needs

breaking, there a detail to suppress in order to obtain a perfect whole, which is of primary importance to every picture. It often happens that on contemplating the complete harmony of a picture by Maris the spectator will enquire : "Where is it taken from?" No easy question to answer, for the truth is that he has taken a mill from The Hague, a tower from Dordrecht, those boats from Rotterdam,—and having lighted upon an effect, a theme, or a contrast, or a dissonance that impress him, he begins to embroider thereon, constructing and demolishing as did Penelope her web, making and remaking his subject until his *ensemble* is found. Then with a rapid and certain hand, with intense and characteristic feeling, he begins the actual execution of his picture.

How many times does he paint his skies, if the highest light does not happen to be in the most advantageous place for the picture! One day he will place it high up, the next day lower, and thus he often paints several entirely different pictures on the same subject. We have lately seen in his studio a subject of the utmost simplicity, a riverside, with women washing in a monotonous grey atmosphere, a whole landscape bathed in a tender uniform light. On returning thither on the morrow, we found the same lines and the same subject; but all had been repainted. This time it was illumined by full genial sunlight, with a blue sky overhead, where lovely silver clouds, lying close to the horizon, completely changed its entire aspect.

Another time it was a mill, one of those fine mills of which we have already spoken. At its foot there were a few hovels roofed in with red tiles; the skies were black with clouds. Maris has perhaps painted this picture thirty times over, at one time adding another roof, at another placing the hovels more to the right, or a fraction nearer to the left, disposing the light in the sky nearer or further from the mill, till having gradually obtained the effect he sought for, the picture was completed.

A superficial observer would have perceived but the slightest possible difference; the subject was the same; a mill, a few houses, a trundle. But for the painter there were the proportions of the first version to consider, and certain discords that by dint of unceasing labour he had caused to disappear from the second. If we are prolix as to this method,

it is because it is so inherent in him. Few painters labour so indefatigably to produce a harmonious whole, with so scrupulous a care of the *mise en scène,* to the end that the work may prove as homogeneous as the worker.

Another special characteristic of his work is a certain grandeur that suggests space and the infinite. Any little picture of a mill, a shore, or view of a town leaves one the impression of illimitable space, while its frame seems to disappear.

The expression of this sense of immensity is the privilege of the highest art, few painters attain to it.

By way of antithesis, his smaller subjects, a riverside, an old bridge, or a room with children, exhale the sense of the minute, an intense *Heimlichkeit.* Blades of grass, old moss-covered stones, textures, furniture bear the mark of his loving brush, and this alone suffices to explain the potent charm of these and other simple subjects. Their extreme delicacy of tone, as well as the refined feeling which has apprehended them, are incomparable. These tender shades of feeling, the variety of expression account for the irresistible attraction of the works of Jacob Maris.

* * *

Maris, like every other painter, has once painted studies after nature, when he was learning his art, to perfect his technique. But he has not done so for many years; it is seldom that in his walks abroad he jots down a few lines, mere notes on paper to serve as indications for a new creation on canvas.

His prodigious memory is a gift he holds in common with his brothers. Matthijs Maris has painted portraits of startling resemblance, months after the death of his model, without any sketch or aid except that of his memory. Thus, after a lapse of years, Jacob Maris sees the exact proportions and relative value of plots of ground, trees, or skies.

After all, what is understood by painting after nature? Is it possible to be a perfectly faithful limner of ever-changing nature in her myriad aspects? Is not the work executed in the studio, as in the fields, the result of interior vision, of artistic conception, before it is the result of an impression produced on the retina? Shoddy work may, after all, be

produced after nature! And when all is said and done, what is open air painting? Does not the true painter carry with him everywhere his intellectual, personal, and individual vision, his mind's eye, in the studio or in the fields? And has an artist ever existed worthy the name, who has servilely copied nature without lending her aught of his own? Art being but a conventional interpretation, of what account are the means employed? What matter if Jacob Maris, who sees a landscape with the eye of his imagination and knows it by heart, should paint it entirely from memory? The result is absolute open air, an impression of light, space, and freshness, the very impression that we get from certain patches of country. Sometimes this impression is enhanced and transformed, but it is ever of humble truthfulness, for it is interpreted by a sensitive and potent mind.

His work is remarkable for its variety of subjects. Not one of his pictures is ever reproduced, no one picture repeats the other, as often happens in the case of figure painters; each of them is remarkable for vigour, freshness of inspiration, and personal impression.

The least important of his works produces a special impression enabling us to see and feel what the master has experienced in the contemplation of nature. He represents and transmits to the spectator the impression, a compound of limpidity, majestic calmness, and indefinable melancholy, that nature has inspired him with, and all this he does with a thrilling intensity.

Dexterity of method is an inadequate means of attaining to this power of impression. To attain to it you need to be more than a good painter, more than a good workman who knows how to wield the brush and mix the colours; you need to live the life you have seen, to have been intensely moved by it, to be, in a word, a poet. It is the only title that becomes so considerable an artist as Jacob Maris, and it is this high gift that raises him above the crowd.

"Many are called but few are chosen;" to understand Jacob Maris one almost needs to possess the same emotional power. To dub him poet, is to vouch for his sincerity and conviction; the man who apprehends the mystery of a landscape, of moonlight, of a luminous evening, and who knows how to express them with intensity, is a poet.

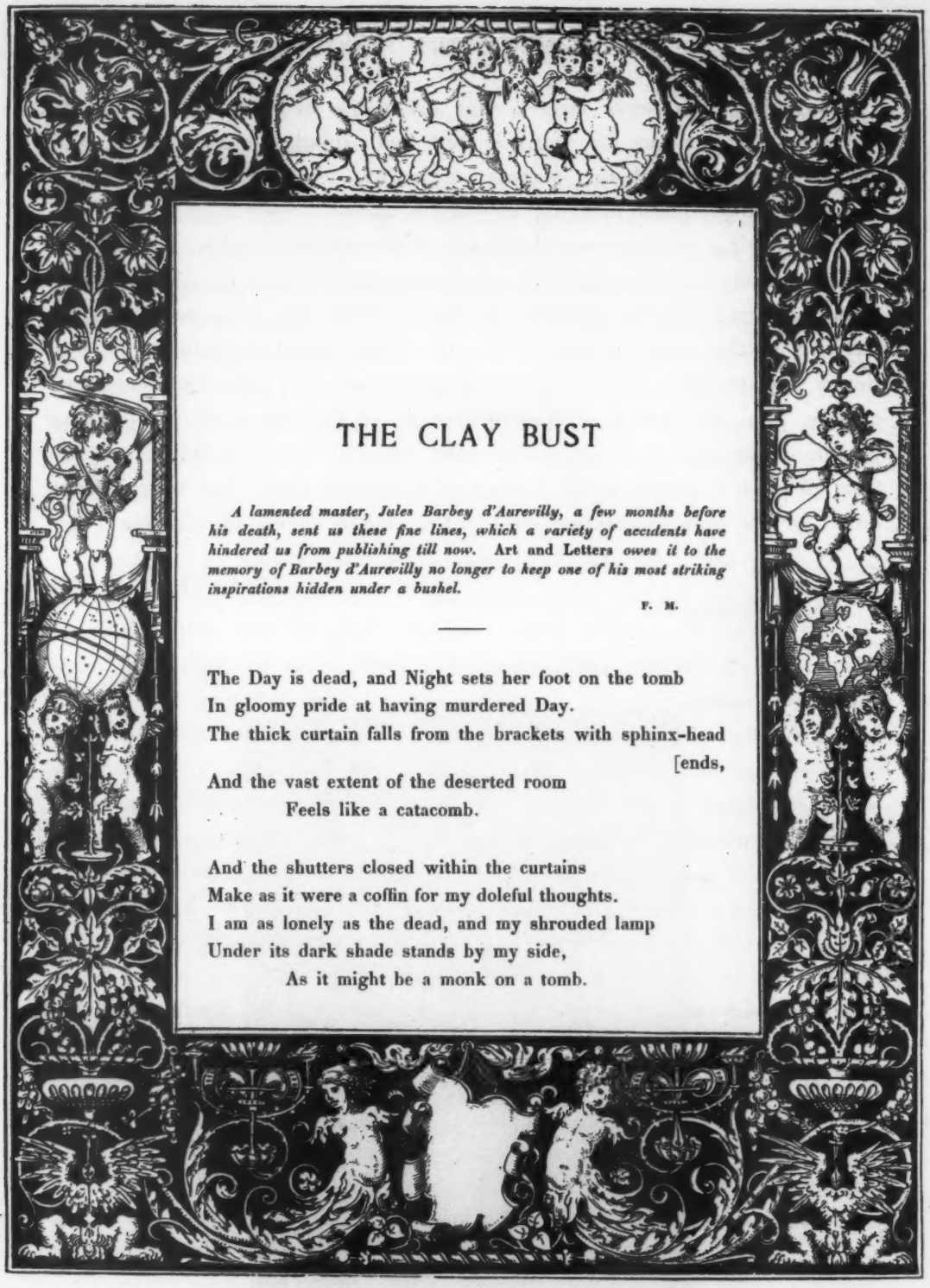
Thus Maris has never striven after originality or startling effects. He has always painted as the spirit moved him, simply, without effort, and has therefore attained the highest originality. And after all, does not true originality consist in being *naïf* and sincere?

After having painted some thousands of cloudy skies, mills, and canals, Maris succeeds in producing from any one of these simple themes the most astounding and original creation, and this proves the masterhand. Jacob Maris is of the small number of innate artists who have said many new things because they have had something to say; his name will therefore emerge from the school of the nineteenth, as the names of his glorious precursors towered over the seventeenth century. He will help to rescue from oblivion a period of the history of a country which has always been noted for the high intellectual gifts of the chosen among its children.

PH. ZILCKEN.

The Hague, March, 1889.





THE CLAY BUST

A lamented master, Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, a few months before his death, sent us these fine lines, which a variety of accidents have hindered us from publishing till now. **Art and Letters** *owes it to the memory of Barbey d'Aurevilly no longer to keep one of his most striking inspirations hidden under a bushel.*

F. M.

The Day is dead, and Night sets her foot on the tomb
In gloomy pride at having murdered Day.
The thick curtain falls from the brackets with sphinx-head [ends,
And the vast extent of the deserted room
Feels like a catacomb.

And the shutters closed within the curtains
Make as it were a coffin for my doleful thoughts.
I am as lonely as the dead, and my shrouded lamp
Under its dark shade stands by my side,
As it might be a monk on a tomb.

And the alabaster vases in the remote corners
Grow pale and dreamy, though still visible——
Nothing stirs the heavy folds of the hangings,
All is still—save the wind in the passage
And wailing above the roofs.

And darkened by the lamp-shade
The walls of the room seem longer by an ell——
And in the half-light, uncertain, vague, and colourless,
A bust is dimly seen—a sallow bust,
Standing out against a corner-panel.

It is a lovely, fair bust, pallidly fair—of clay;
Divinely moulded with bewitching art.
No name is to be read on its fictile plinth——
I have always seen it there—in that corner—standing
Like a dream, a motionless dream.

It is the bust of a woman with delicate aquiline features.
Her hair drawn off her brow and temples,
Who, from that corner, shrouded in discreet shade,
Casts a sidelong glance from her wide-open eyes,
A doubting, haughty glance.

A strange being to me was that feminine bust,
A mystery. And from my earliest years
My eyes would seek her in the dim twilight——
And then, when space and time lay between us,
In my heart, her other shrine.

Yes, for that bust was my first love,
The first mad love of my solitary heart.
Who the woman may have been remains a mystery,
It was, I had been told, an aunt of my mother's,
A lady de Chavincour,

Who died at the age of thirty—nothing more. Her dress
In that bust is very simple, and in the fashion of the day.
Her hair dressed in high curls has not even a pin.
It might be a portrait, without knots or bows,
Of Marie-Antoinette.

It is the very necklace—a necklace of sequins
Which women then clasped tight, as if it were a belt,
A cravat for the throat rather than an ornament;
And the bodice they wore, cut very low,
With a point where the bosom divides.

O Bust, idolised by my foolish childhood,
Mysterious Bust, which I see again to-night,
When nothing, nothing in my heart wears a ray of glory,
I find thee radiant, dimly golden in thy dark corner,
O Bust, my earliest idol!

All the living busts I have clasped to my heart
Have been broken, or soiled, or marred by life's use,
Their fleshly clay has been more quick to yield
Than thy clay, O Bust! changeless effigy!
Unmoved conqueror of Death!

Thou alone hast never stirred—Bust, form or material!
Life gliding past thee has found nothing to rob thee of.
I have come back to finish my dream near thee,
And of thee I shall dream till I reach the graveyard.
But thou, O Bust! after me whose heart will that clay
Tempt to dream above my dust?

LE BUSTE JAUNE

Le Jour meurt — et la Nuit met le pied sur sa tombe,
Avec le noir orgueil d'avoir tué le Jour!
De la patère au sphinx, l'épais rideau retombe,
Et le salon désert dans son vaste pourtour
A pris des airs de catacombe!

Et les volets fermés par-dessus le rideau
Ont fait comme un cercueil à ma sombre pensée;
Je suis seul comme un mort — et ma lampe baissée,
Sous son capuchon noir, près de moi déposée,
Semble un moine sur un tombeau.

Et les vases d'albâtre au fond des encoignures
Blêmissent vaporeux, mais paraissent encor...
Rien ne fait plus bouger les plis lourds des tentures,
Tout se tait... excepté le vent du corridor
Qui pleure aussi sur les toitures !

Et par le capuchon de la lampe assombris,
Les grands murs du salon semblent plus longs d'une aune...
Et dans le clair-obscur, oscillant, vague, atone,
On voit se détacher un buste, — un buste jaune,
Bombant d'un angle de lambris !

C'est un beau buste blond, d'un blond pâle, — en argile,
Moulé divinement, avec un art charmant !
Aucun nom ne se lit sur son socle fragile...
Je l'ai toujours vu là, — dans ce coin, — y restant
Comme un Rêve, — un Rêve immobile !

C'est un buste de femme, aux traits busqués et fins,
Aux cheveux relevés, aux tempes découvertes,
Et qui, là, de ce coin, voilé d'ombres discrètes,
Vous allonge en trois quarts, les paupières ouvertes,
De hautains regards incertains !

Ce fut pour moi toujours une étrange figure
Que ce buste de femme, — et dès mes premiers ans,
Je la cherchais des yeux dans sa pénombre obscure...
Puis, lorsque j'en fus loin par l'espace et le temps,
Dans mon cœur, cette autre encoignure !

Car, ce buste, ce fut... oui, mon premier amour,
Le premier amour fou de mon cœur solitaire.
La femme qu'il était est restée un mystère...
C'était — m'avait-on dit — la tante de ma mère,
Une dame de Chavincour,

Morte vers ses trente ans... Rien de plus. — Sa toilette,
En ce buste, est très simple et celle de son temps.
Ses cheveux étagés n'ont pas même une aigrette.
On dirait, mais alors sans nœuds et sans rubans,
La Reine Marie-Antoinette.

C'est bien là ce collier, — ce collier de sequins,
Que les femmes serraient, comme on fait sa ceinture...
La cravate du cou bien plus que sa parure ;
Et ce corsage aussi, dont la brusque échancrure
Descend jusqu'entre les deux seins.

O buste, idolâtré de mon enfance folle,
Buste mystérieux que je revois ce soir...
Quand rien, rien dans mon cœur, n'a plus une auréole,
Te voilà rayonnant, jaune dans ton coin noir,
O buste, ma première idole !

Tous les bustes vivants que j'ai pris sur mon cœur
S'y sont brisés, usés, déformés par la vie...
Leur argile de chair s'est plus vite amollie
Que ton argile, ô buste ! — immobile effigie,
Et du temps inerte vainqueur !

Toi seul n'as pas bougé, — buste, forme et matière !
La vie, en s'écoulant, n'a pu rien t'enlever.
Mon rêve, auprès de toi je le viens achever...
Je songerai de toi jusques au cimetière...
Mais, ô buste ! après moi, quel cœur fera rêver
Ton argile, sur ma poussière ?...

JULES BARBEY D'AUREVILLY.





THE STORY OF A MARSHAL OF THE EMPIRE

AUGEREAU, DUC DE CASTIGLIONE

A man who shines in a subordinate position——

A man who shines in a subordinate position may be quite unfit for a position of command! The truth of this well-worn commonplace has been demonstrated by thousands of examples, but in few more conclusively than in that of Marshal Augereau, Duc de Castiglione, who, after winning fame as a general of division under such chiefs as Dugommier and Bonaparte, displayed the most marked mediocrity when called himself to command in chief.

The story of Augereau is instructive from many other points of view; most people are but slightly, if at all, acquainted with it; his youth was marked by adventures which verge on the romantic, and the sad palinodes which were the blemish of his old age should not make us forget the glorious opening of his life as a soldier. I have an additional motive for writing in the fact that a collection of inedited documents whose authenticity is beyond question, viz., the Memoirs of General de Marbot,

who was his aide-de-camp for six years, has supplied me with details that I considered full of interest concerning himself, his character, and his actions. I hope that this interest will be shared by my readers, and I shall esteem myself happy if I can succeed, thanks to the kind complaisance of the heirs of General de Marbot, in setting before them a picture of Augereau as he really was, for he has been travestied by most of the historians who have spoken of him.

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Augereau has often been depicted as a coarse boor, a swashbuckler, a pillaging, ignorant ruffian. We shall see how much is true in this portrait, and how much false. Born at Paris, in 1758, Augereau is commonly said to have had a bricklayer and a fruiterer for his parents. This, to begin with, is only half exact; Augereau's father was a fruiterer, licensed purveyor to Monsieur, otherwise called the Comte de Provence, King Louis XVI.'s brother, and afterwards his successor under the title of Louis XVIII. The mother of the future Marshal was a distinguished woman for the class to which she belonged. Being a native of Munich, she spoke nothing but German to her children, so that young Augereau gained an acquaintance with, and a fluency in, the German language which afterwards stood him in good stead. He was seventeen years old when, thanks to the good offices of a brother of his mother's who filled a post in the household of the Comte de Provence, he was admitted to the ranks of the Carbineers, a select troop of cavalry of which that prince was colonel. He soon became a non-commissioned officer, which implies that he was a man of more education than is generally ascribed to him; and he gained the esteem of his superiors, notably of the General and Baron de Malseigne, who exercised the actual command of the Carbineers. He was tall, nimble, strong-limbed, and quick at all bodily exercises. Though he never held the post of fencing-master, he became one of the most expert swordsmen in the regiment, and his reputation on this score cost him more than one duel, at a time when men fought solely to prove their superior skill with the weapon. From the documents placed at my disposal I have extracted an account of two of

these duels, which are thoroughly characteristic of the manners of the age.

The Carbineers were in garrison at Saumur, where they formed a school of instruction to all the cavalry, each regiment sending its best men there to be trained according to the traditional principles, which had been preserved with rigid care. During a journey which our young hero, now a non-commissioned officer, was taking to Paris, he happened to be present at a social gathering in which the famous Saint-Georges also took part—that god of fencing, of whom it was said that he never met his master. This king of swordsmen said to those standing round him, pointing to Augereau: "There is the finest swordsman that I know." Thereupon one Méran, fencing-instructor to a regiment of Dragoons, wrote to Augereau, summoning him to acknowledge himself inferior to him, on pain of being killed. Needless to say, Augereau accepted the challenge; they fought, and the Dragoon received a straightforward thrust full in the chest, from which he had the good fortune to recover. Long afterwards Méran, having married and retired from service, and being the father of seven or eight children, had fallen into the depths of poverty, when the idea occurred to him of making an appeal to the pity of his former conqueror, now a Marshal of the Empire and General in Chief. He went to see him, accompanied by all his children, and furnished with a small fiddle, and addressed him thus: "Sir, I am the father of a large family, and have nothing to give them to eat; I will make my children dance before you, so as to earn a crust of bread!" Augereau was much moved; he gave him his hand and made him sit down at his table. Afterwards he procured him a place connected with the administration of coach offices, which rescued him from want. Here we have a first instance of Augereau's goodness of heart; I shall have several more to quote.

The second duel was more tragic in its issue. My readers are doubtless aware that in former days there was bitter rivalry, even hatred, rarely founded on any known cause, between the different regiments, a hatred which found expression in brawls so violent and so frequent, that it was often necessary to separate the hostile regiments by placing them in different garrisons. Thus under the Second Empire it became necessary

to remove the Carbineers from Versailles, where they were in perpetual strife with the Zouaves of the Guard. Captain Blanc, in his *Generals and Soldiers of Africa,* describes a duel of unheard-of ferocity, which took place at Brest under the Restoration, and was caused by the rancorous jealousy between the 2nd Light Brigade and the Naval Artillery; the respective champions of the two regiments faced each other seven times in succession, and every time one or the other was seriously wounded; then, to bring the matter to a final conclusion, they were placed facing one another in one of the trenches of the fortress, with two pistols, of which only one was loaded; the man to whom the lot had fallen to have the blank charge fired first, and the other in cold blood placed his pistol against his adversary's forehead and blew his brains out! Such a tale would be incredible did we not know the history of regimental quarrels under the First Empire, quarrels which sometimes resulted in combats of ten on each side!

All that is ancient history for us nowadays. It belongs to a time when the army lived quite apart from civilian society, when each regiment had its distinct personality, when it was the custom to arouse emulation by inculcating on the soldier the idea that his regiment was the first of all. In the remodelled army the soldier is, so to speak, lost in the civilian, and merely passes through his regiment, not having time enough to contract the genuine spirit of the flag, a spirit whose loss there would be no need to regret, were it not that, side by side with those sanguinary discords, an instance of which we have just seen, it produced some acts of striking heroism on the field of battle.

One of these regimental hatreds had existed from time immemorial between the Carbineers and the Lunéville Gendarmes—the latter being the title of the companies of gendarmerie or heavy cavalry who were stationed in that town to serve as body-guard to King Stanislas, Louis XV.'s father-in-law. Chance, which had kept these two corps separate for twenty-five years, brought them together again in camp at Compiègne. The old rivalry sprang into life again at once, and with so much heat that some encounters were deemed necessary. The utmost that the generals and officers of the two corps could obtain was that these encounters

should be restricted to a single duel between two non-commissioned officers chosen by their comrades.

The champion of the Gendarmes was chosen without hesitation; he was a fencing-instructor, renowned for his skill as a swordsman, his ferocity, and his wonderful luck as a duellist; he had just previously killed two sergeants of the French Guards on two successive days, so as to keep his hand in, as he said. There was more difficulty about the choice of the Carbineers. The whole body of non-commissioned officers first selected by vote the twelve best swordsmen from their number. The champion was then chosen by lot from among these twelve, of whom Augereau was one. The lot fell upon a quartermaster, a married man and father of four children. Augereau protested, declaring that it was not right to expose the father of a family to such grave risk, and claimed to be allowed to take the place of his comrade, who for his part was by no means willing to withdraw from the mission of honour which had been assigned to him by lot. After some discussion the non-commissioned officers decided in favour of Augereau's plea, and he thus became the champion of the regiment.

Nothing further was wanted but a semblance of motive to justify the duel. Augereau betook himself to the café, accompanied by his comrades, sat down at a table, and ordered what was termed in military parlance a *demi-tasse*. The Gendarme, in his turn, soon entered the same room and proceeded to seat himself upon Augereau's table, with his back turned towards him, about a foot from him. Cavalry soldiers at that time wore close-fitting trousers with a sort of vent-hole opening at the back, below the waist-belt. Augereau poured in at this opening the boiling contents of his *demi-tasse,* which ran down the Gendarme's trousers and made him jump up, scalded and furious.

This was a sufficient provocation; the two champions and their friends left the house at once, and proceeded to the ground, which had been fixed beforehand. On their way, the Gendarme asked Augereau where he would rather be buried—in the town or the country. "I have always been fond of the open air," he answered, "and I should like to be buried in the country." "In that case," said the Gendarme, addressing

his second, "you will have the gentleman buried beside the two sergeants whom I despatched yesterday and the day before." Augereau smiled undaunted at this boastful language; on reaching the ground the two champions took off their coats, and then began a desperate fight, the two men being very evenly matched and both first-rate swordsmen. After some moments, however, the Gendarme, amazed and annoyed that he had not already killed his man, began to grow excited and to lose his head. Augereau, on the other hand, who had remained perfectly calm, ran him right through the body, saying coolly: "It is you who will be buried in the country." And so in truth it was, for the wound was mortal, and the two sergeants of the French Guards were thus avenged.

When the camp was broken up, the Carbineers returned to Saumur, where Augereau soon became the victim of a most unpleasant adventure. One day as he was superintending the grooming of the horses, a young officer came up, riding-whip in hand, and proceeded to point out to him that the horses were being badly groomed. Augereau was about to make some answer, when the officer flew into a rage, and raised his whip in a threatening manner as if to strike him before the whole company. Augereau sent the whip flying some yards with a backhanded stroke; the officer in a fury drew his sword and assailed him, crying: "Defend yourself!" At first Augereau simply tried to parry his thrusts, but finding himself wounded he returned a stroke, and the officer fell stark dead——

It was a most serious matter. All the witnesses were unanimous in stating that Augereau had been compelled to defend his life against a violent and unprovoked attack; but he had had the audacity to draw his sword against an officer, an officer too of noble birth, a member of a powerful family. It seemed therefore certain that he would be condemned to death. The Baron de Malseigne, who, as I have mentioned above, took an interest in him and esteemed him highly, took active measures to save him, which were ultimately successful. He sent for a Carbineer, named Papon, who was about to be discharged from the service, and whose route had been made out for Geneva, his native place, and asked him if he would mind handing over his route to Augereau, promising


Louis mazin

him another as soon as it could be obtained. Papon's consent was the salvation of Augereau, who ever after preserved the warmest gratitude towards him, and did not fail, even after he had become a Marshal of France, to show him signs of friendship.

Our hero accordingly found himself at Geneva, where he soon learnt that the court-martial had condemned him to death. Papon's father was a wholesale dealer in clocks and watches in that town. One of his clerks being about to start for the East, the refugee asked and obtained permission to accompany him; he thus traversed Greece, the Isles of the Archipelago, Turkey, and the Crimea. While he was in the last-named land, which Russia was then seeking to annex, a Russian colonel was struck with his appearance, and offered to make him a sergeant at once if he would join his regiment. Augereau was thirsting for adventures; he accepted the offer, went through the war in the ranks of the Russian army, under the command of the famous Suwarrow, and was actually wounded. After the annexation of the Crimea his regiment returned into the interior; and soon tired of garrison life, and perhaps still more tired of living under Russian discipline, he deserted, and succeeded in reaching Prussia, where he enlisted as a common soldier in Prince Henry's regiment. He served there for a time, and was then transferred to the regiment of the King's Grenadiers, for which the finest men in the army were picked out. Some days after, Frederick II. came to review this regiment, which was the object of his especial predilection, and of which he knew every man by name; he stopped before the new recruit, examined him from head to foot with a satisfied eye, and asked from what land he came. "From France," was his answer. Now his Majesty, who had once affected a love for our country, had afterwards come to regard it with undisguised aversion. He turned his head and walked away, saying, "I'm sorry to hear it, for I should have liked to make something of him."

Augereau resolved from that moment to leave a regiment and an army in which there was no possibility of advancement for him. A resolution more easy to form than to carry out! Desertion was the pest of armies in the eighteenth century. Guibert, that well-known military writer,

assessed the number of French deserters serving in the troops of the King of Prussia at from twenty to twenty-five thousand. The Prussian army itself was not free from this plague; about one-twelfth of its soldiers every year found means to desert, notwithstanding the coercive measures enforced to prevent desertion, and the terrible penalties inflicted on deserters who were caught. The latter formed a large proportion of the whole number, for they were tracked not only by the police, but by the peasants and the huntsmen with their dogs. To evade these dangers, Augereau conceived the plan of desertion in a large armed body. He won over for this purpose nearly a hundred of his comrades, saying to them : "We all wish to escape far away from here, but, if we go singly, the chances are nine to one that every one of us will be stopped on the way and brought back to the regiment, where we shall be flogged to death. Let us then desert all together. We shall be strong enough to overcome any resistance we are likely to meet." As he said, so it happened; three or four of the band were killed or captured; the remainder reached the Saxon frontiers by night, and found themselves in safety. Augereau then stayed some time at Dresden, giving lessons in fencing and dancing.

Meanwhile the birth of the Dauphin, son of Louis XVI., occasioned the proclamation of a general amnesty for all deserters in France; moreover the sentence pronounced against Augereau by the court-martial had been revised, and a new judgment had declared him innocent. He was now free, and secure against all further pursuit; not only was he at liberty to enter France, but he was reinstated in his former rank of quartermaster in the Carbineers. His conduct there was doubtless good, for when the King of the Two Sicilies asked the French Government to send him instructors for the Neapolitan army, he was chosen to take part in the military mission that was organized for this purpose under the direction of the Comte de Pommereuil, a mission which included many distinguished officers, among others the illustrious Éblé, captain of artillery, whose name has remained to this day associated with the most glorious memories.

At Naples Augereau had the honour to give fencing lessons to the

Crown Prince, and was appointed sub-lieutenant in the Neapolitan army. But his adventures were not ended. Having fallen in love with the daughter of a Greek merchant, he asked her hand of her parents, but they refused it. His passion for their daughter, however, was requited, and the lovers were married secretly and left for Lisbon, where they lived peacefully on what Augereau earned by giving lessons, up to the outbreak of the French Revolution. The Court of Lisbon was far from favouring the new ideas, dreading lest their contagion might spread; and thought it its duty to adopt preventive measures against such of the French residents as were likely to turn fomenters of disorder. Augereau has always declared that nothing he said or did at that time could have furnished ground for persecution. But none the less he was arrested one morning, and incarcerated in one of those famous dungeons of the Inquisition, which had in former times received so many victims of arbitrary power. Luckily for him his Greek wife was a woman of courage and resource, and she spared no pains to rescue him. A vessel under the tricoloured flag had entered the port of Lisbon; she obtained access to the captain, and besought him to be the bearer of a letter informing the French Government of her husband's imprisonment. It was then about the end of the year 1792, during the full tide of revolutionary enthusiasm. The captain, though he belonged merely to the merchant service, called upon the Portuguese Ministers and announced to them that if Augereau was not at once set at liberty, he would declare war in the name of France.

Whether they regarded this threat as serious, or whether (as seems more likely) they had recognized Augereau's innocence and the illegality of his arrest, at all events the Ministry gave orders for his release, and he sailed for Havre with his wife, on board the ship of his deliverer, for whom he felt the warmest gratitude all his life, treating him as a friend even after his promotion to the pinnacle of greatness.

The romance of Augereau's life was over; his serious history was about to begin, but even that history at times contained touches of romance. His first series of travels had carried him to Greece, to Turkey, to the Crimea, Russia, Prussia, Naples, and Portugal; the second series

was destined to lead him from La Vendée to Spain, from Spain to Italy, from Italy to Germany, then to Brittany, Austria, Prussia, Poland, then again into Spain, to retrace his steps thence to Germany, and so on—— by glorious though blood-stained stages, such as Figueras, Millesimo, Castiglione, Arcola, Jena, Eylau, Gerona, Leipzig, etc.

* * *

Almost immediately on his arrival at Havre, Augereau set out for Paris, where the Minister for War made him adjutant-major of a battalion destined for La Vendée. He was there under the orders of Ronsin, one of those *sans-culotte* generals, who were the product of the headlong zeal of the Revolution, and whose incapacity and presumption brought France and the Republic within a hair's breadth of destruction. Augereau brought himself into notice by rectifying an erroneous order given by his chief, and was raised by the Commissioners of the Convention to the rank of commander of battalion. General Turreau crowned his hopes by removing him from the civil war in La Vendée, and taking him with himself to join the army of the Eastern Pyrenees.

It was a rough school of warfare for our veteran in adventures, this army, always heroic, continually beaten, but never discouraged, forced to follow almost impassable paths over steep and frowning mountains in order to attack the foe. Augereau's courage, his sure and ready eye, above all, the admirable art he displayed in cheering the soldiers and imbuing them with his own spirit, brought him rapidly to the top of the tree, and when, on the 1st of January, 1794, the illustrious Dugommier, who had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Eastern Pyrenees, re-organized it into three divisions, forming two wings and a centre, Augereau received the command of the right wing, with the title of general of division. His division was the finest, the best disciplined, and the most fiery of the three; and the task assigned to it was the hardest, in the plan adopted by Dugommier for driving the enemy from French ground; being furthest from the sea, it occupied the most uneven and the most desolate tract of country.

The key to the Spanish position was the entrenched camp of the

Boulou. General Pérignon, afterwards a Marshal of the Empire, was to carry this camp with the centre, while the right wing was to divert the attention of the enemy by a vigorous attack. Augereau executed this mission so well that La Union, the general in command of the Spaniards, was forced to weaken his centre greatly in order to resist him. Pérignon profited by this to capture, after a brilliant engagement, the redoubts which covered the main camp of the Boulou. The defenders of these redoubts, driven from their posts, tried to regain the frontier, when Augereau threw himself impetuously on them to cut off their retreat, carried the entrenchments of the bridge of Céret, and sent on his cavalry against the column of artillery and baggage-waggons of the Spanish army. Then ensued a scene of indescribable confusion at the foot of the lofty mountains, on a narrow road shut in between rocks and chasms. Powder-stores exploded, blowing the ammunition-waggons into the air, gun-carriages were broken, cannons rolled down into the ravines, and the brilliant Spanish cavalry were scattered in flight over the precipitous slopes, pursued by the bullets of our skilful rifles.

Augereau's ardour had carried him far in advance of the rest of the army. Yielding to the charms of independence, he increased the distance between them, in which proceeding he was assisted by the nature of the country and the difficulty of communication. He was all the more impelled to do this from his desire to avoid all contact with General Pérignon, for whom he felt an intense antipathy. Child as he was of the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, having spent his youth in adventures more fitted to quicken his spirit than to discipline his character, Augereau, the type of the upstart and bumptious plebeian, could feel no sympathy for the former Marquis de Pérignon, once captain of the Royal Rifles of Guyenne, sometime Royalist member of the Legislative Assembly, who had joined the army of the Eastern Pyrenees, after a friend had persuaded him to abandon his purpose of emigrating.

Augereau's isolation from the main body well-nigh cost him dearly. Attacked and surrounded by a superior force at the foundries of the Muga, which he had taken by a bold stroke, his division only extricated themselves by fighting with all the recklessness of despair. The remem-

brance of the fight at the foundry remained ever after in the minds of all who took part in it, and impressed an indelible character of desperate energy on Augereau's division.

His reputation was enhanced by the battle of San Lorenzo de la Muga, where he had to bear the brunt of the main efforts of the Spanish army. Attacked by 22,000 men, against whom he could only oppose 7,000, he grasped the situation at a glance, and sent four columns against the plateau occupied by General Curten's division. While three of these columns engaged the enemy in flank, Augereau reserved for himself the attack in front with the fourth column; this manœuvre was crowned with the most complete success, dearly bought though it was with the death of General Mirabel, one of those unknown heroes of whom the French army had so many at the beginning of the wars of the Revolution, and who died before attaining the rank and the glory due to their exploits. No one now knows the name of Mirabel, that name pronounced then with terror by the Spaniards, with admiration by the soldiers in the army of the Eastern Pyrenees, and with affection by the people of the country, for whom he tried to lighten as far as possible the burden of the war. This was also the constant aim of Augereau, who has been represented as hard and sullen. And yet General de Marbot, who acted as aide-de-camp to Bernadotte, Augereau, Murat, Lannes, and Masséna, records that of the five it was he who showed himself most gentle, one might almost say paternal, towards the inhabitants of the land he occupied.

The battle of San Lorenzo de la Muga made Augereau the hero of the army of the Eastern Pyrenees. The glory of the day was his again at the battle of the Black Mountain of Figueras, an extraordinary engagement which resulted in one of the most remarkable victories achieved by the Republican armies. The Spaniards were the stronger in both numbers and position; they were protected by twenty-four redoubts bristling with cannon; at their centre was the fortress of Roure, a veritable citadel, with trenches cut out in the rock, armed with twenty-five pieces of heavy artillery. The French army had no alternative but to offer battle, or perish of hunger. On the first day Augereau carried

all the positions before him, routed the left wing of the Spaniards, and was preparing to follow up his success, when he learnt that the French centre and left were broken, and that Dugommier, the Commander-in-Chief, had been killed by a cannon-ball. Pérignon, who took Dugommier's place, gave the troops two days to rest and take up a new position. On the third day the fight was renewed. This time the French were victorious all along the line, but Augereau's division had the honour to capture the citadel of Roure, the Rifles nimbly and gaily scaling its lofty parapets. Those who reached the top first gave a hand to those behind them, to present them, as they said, in the ball-room. The results of the victory were immense, the slaughter was horrible. The Spaniards having violated the terms of the capitulation of Collioure, the French soldiers had sworn for the future to grant no quarter. They kept their word; nine thousand men were killed, and not a single prisoner was taken.

Towards his rival Pérignon, Augereau showed himself an obedient lieutenant, but there was never that confidence between them which there had been between Dugommier and Augereau. In spite of the victory of the Black Mountain, in spite of the capture of Figueras and of Rosas, Pérignon was deprived of the command in chief, and replaced by Scherer, a general of small capacity, who let his army rust in idle repose on the line of the Fluvia. As though privation and disease were not enough to effect its disorganization, political passions lent their aid to the work. The army contained but a small element of the old regular force; scarcely anything, in fact, beyond one or two regiments of the line; it was composed mainly of volunteer battalions from the south and irregular corps, whose names will suffice to indicate their character: Vengeurs, Légion de La Montagne, Braconniers montagnards, etc., etc. So long as they were kept down under the yoke of strict discipline, and always employed in fighting, these heterogeneous elements blended before the enemy into a united and formidable whole, but when once left at repose, after the revolution of the 9th Thermidor, which effected the fall of Robespierre and his adherents, the soldiers of the Eastern Pyrenees relapsed to their former sentiments; for them, the Mountain party were

the deliverers of the country. Augereau, whose every exploit had been greeted with the enthusiastic applause of the Jacobin Club, was one of the most extreme partisans.

The last engagement of the army of the Eastern Pyrenees was the battle of the Fluvia, in which each of the two parties claimed the credit for itself, and Augereau showed himself as tenacious as he had hitherto shown himself impetuous. The decisive character of the victory was due to him alone. The treaty of Basle shortly afterwards put an end to the war with Spain. Scherer was then appointed to the command of the army in Italy, whither he took part of the army of the Eastern Pyrenees; Augereau accompanied him.

The troops of the old army of Italy and those who came from Spain preserved for a long time their distinctive characters, typified respectively by Masséna and Augereau. The noble emulation between them was one of the principal causes of the success which followed the new army of Italy.

Augereau's division had at first, in the Alps, a second taste of the life of misery and privation that they had experienced in the Pyrenees. They played an important part in Scherer's victory at Loano, but Augereau's military talents were then eclipsed by Masséna's; both, however, and indeed all others, were overshadowed by Bonaparte, who came to replace Scherer after the battle of Loano. It is said that on his arrival at head-quarters at Albenga, the new Commander-in-Chief having summoned the generals of division to give them his instructions, Masséna, who had the first interview, said on coming away to Augereau, who was awaiting his turn for admission: "You profess never to have found your master! Ah, well! You are just going to see him."

Augereau displayed from the first, at Millesimo and Lodi, the impetuous ardour which had already gained him renown in the Pyrenees; but his most glorious days, on which his most forcible claims to military honour are based, date from Castiglione. After a preliminary series of victories and the conclusion of treaties with Piedmont, Naples, and Rome, Bonaparte was to all appearance in tranquil possession of Italy, only Mantua being left for him to take. Suddenly a new Austrian army, under the

veteran Field-Marshal Wurmser, descended the Alps by three different routes, and threatened to surround the French army and cut off its communications with Milan. The position was highly critical. At a council of war most of the generals, including Masséna himself, pronounced themselves in favour of a speedy retreat. Augereau alone opposed this advice.

"With what shall we defend ourselves?" asked one of the generals.

"With our bayonets!" was his prompt reply; and he led Bonaparte along the front of his division, when all his men shouted :

"No retreat! let us march on the enemy!"

"Yes," said Bonaparte, and making up his mind with that rapid decision which characterized his genius, he gave the necessary orders for raising the siege of Mantua and concentrating his forces; by his directions Augereau marched against Brescia, of which the Austrians had already gained possession, and entered it in triumph.

In spite of this first success, all was going badly; the general who had been charged with the defence of the important position of Castiglione had abandoned it in precipitous haste, before the advanced guard of the enemy's column coming from the east; Bonaparte seemed about to be taken between two fires; he assembled all his generals in a barn at Monte Chiaro, and proposed to intrench himself there and await the rallying of the army.

"No," cried Augereau, "we must fight the troops that are before us. The Austrians are one hour's march from here, 20,000 strong. But it is not that which makes me uneasy; I am jealous for your glory; we must fight here, and I answer for the victory. At all events," he added with a sly smile, "if we are beaten it will be because Augereau has been killed."

"I must march against Lodi," answered Bonaparte.

"What! Then who will command, if you go?"

"You." And Bonaparte departed to rejoin Masséna's troops at Lonato, where they were faced by another Austrian column coming from the west. After his departure, Augereau, having accepted all responsibility, employed the rest of the evening in making his dispositions.

Next day he made a vigorous attack at Castiglione upon Wurmser's advanced guard. The fight was severe. The heights and castle of Casti-

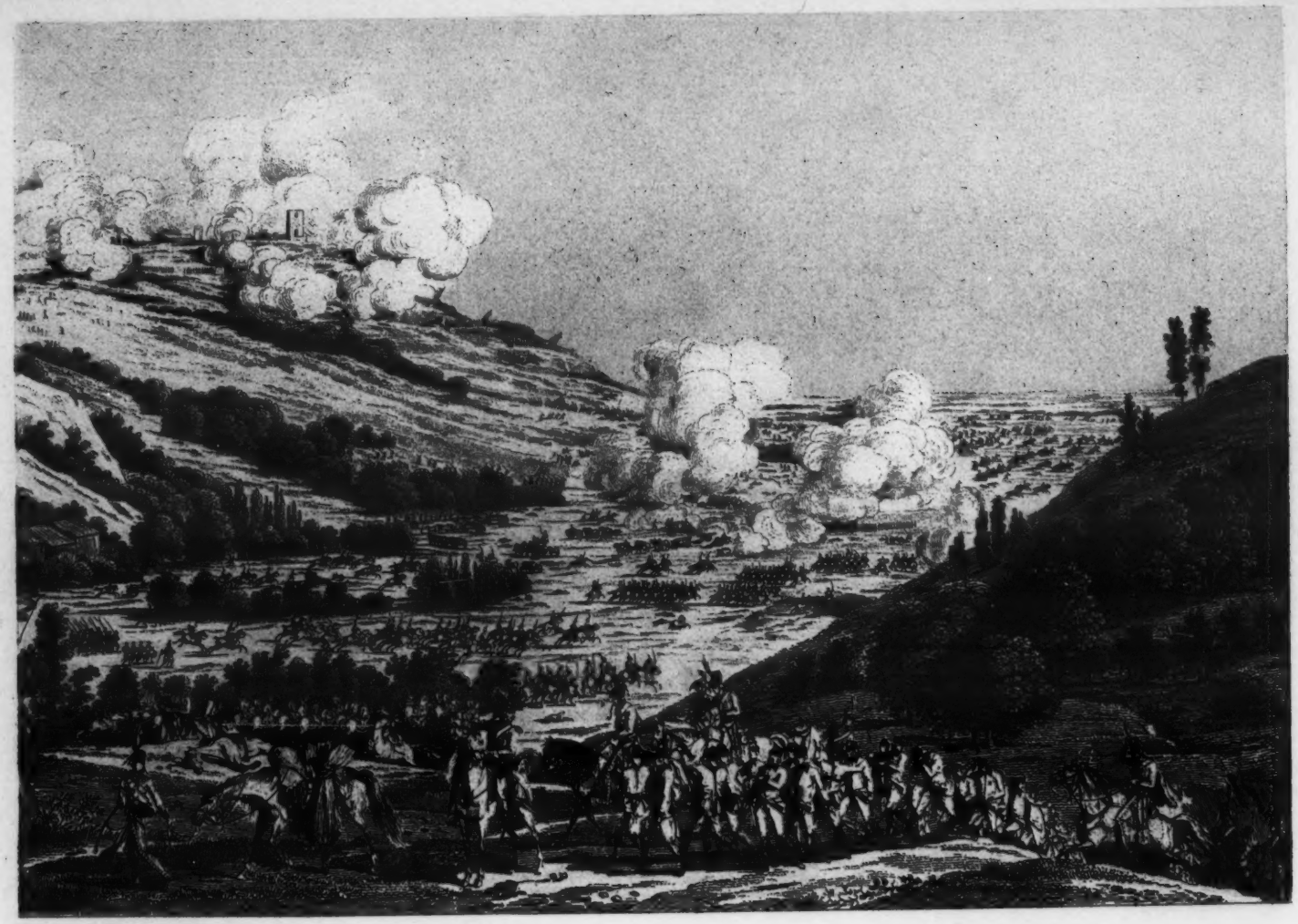
glione were energetically defended by the Austrians. Nearly all the generals and superior officers of Augereau's division were killed or wounded, but Augereau rallied his troops, put himself at their head, and carried the position. But he soon had another enemy on his hands; this was Wurmser himself, with the main body of his forces. Compelled to abandon Castiglione, Augereau barred the way of the Austrians by a stratagem which proved a complete success.

The village of Monte Chiaro, which he had to defend, was protected by a dried-up torrent-bed, about four or five feet deep, covered by a dense growth of shrubs and brushwood. Behind this brushwood, and screened by it from the sight of the enemy, he placed all his artillery, under the command of Marmont, aide-de-camp to the Commander-in-Chief. Fifteen paces in front he drew up all his infantry, seven thousand strong, in order of battle, while the cavalry stood on the left among the vines. After an ineffectual cannonade, which the French artillery refrained from answering, the mass of the Austrian cavalry, numbering four thousand men, came on at a trot, covering the plain with a cloud of dust. Augereau's infantry fired one round, and then instantly threw themselves into the torrent-bed. The artillery opened a murderous fire with grape-shot, which lasted about ten minutes, each gun firing more than twenty rounds. A roll of drums gave the signal for the firing to cease, and the infantry, leaving their cover, charged with the bayonet against the Austrian cavalry, who were already half destroyed, while Augereau's cavalry left the vines to carry out the pursuit. Augereau finally returned to the position he had left.

On this same day, Bonaparte and Masséna defeated Wurmser's lieutenants at Lonato. Next day the Commander-in-Chief returned to Castiglione, and warmly embraced Augereau, whose vigour had saved the army.

Two days later, Bonaparte, Masséna, and Augereau united gained a decisive victory over Wurmser at Castiglione. In memory of these events, eleven years after, the Emperor Napoleon gave Augereau the title of Duc de Castiglione, with a pension of two hundred thousand francs a year to support it.

It was in the campaign of Castiglione that Augereau attained the zenith



of his glory; but he achieved many other illustrious feats in Italy, and tradition has given him credit for even more than history. He has been represented, for instance, with flag in hand, leading on his troops to cross the bridge of Arcola in the face of the Austrians. This legend requires a little pruning. The truth is that when Augereau's division was marching along an embankment by the side of the Alpone, the head of the column, exposed to a heavy fire in flank, stopped in hesitation. The chief seized a flag, went on to the front rank, and advanced some paces, but seeing that he was not followed, he returned to the column. However, Bonaparte succeeded no better than he, on repeating the attempt some moments later, and he produced nothing but a fearful scene of confusion, in which some generals and aides-de-camp were killed or severely wounded in trying to cover him with their bodies. Having fallen into the marsh from the top of the embankment, he would infallibly have perished, had not two of his aides-de-camp given him a hand to help him to climb up again, and the grenadiers, seeing their general on the point of being captured by the Austrians, charged up and drove the enemy back to the bridge. It was not till next day that he succeeded in turning and capturing the village of Arcola. In this bloody engagement, only three generals—two of them being Augereau and Masséna—escaped unhurt.

In the plains of Lombardy, the army found wealth and abundance; but it lost, on the other hand, some of those virtues which it had displayed amid the bitter privations of the Pyrenees and the Alps. Farewell to its disinterested patriotism, its republican austerity, its surly probity! Energy on the march and in battle still distinguished this fine army, but eagerness for enjoyment, love of voluptuous ease, and greed for the rapid acquisition of riches had grown to such proportions as to cause anxiety on behalf of discipline. Augereau's antecedents had certainly not predisposed him to feel contempt for money, but if we may not put him in the category of those (thank heaven, a large majority) who always showed themselves perfectly honest and disinterested, at least he had the reputation of being even more prodigal and liberal than he was grasping. A far from lenient judge, Marshal Marmont, says of him: "He was fond of money, but very generous, he felt almost as much

pleasure in giving as in taking it. In spite of his origin, he was magnificent in his ways."

I may add that the same magnificence characterized his handwriting, as the reader can judge by the subjoined facsimile of his signature :



Unhappily, political extravagance exercised even greater sway than money over Augereau, and made him ridiculous. Under the Jacobin terror the aristocratic title of "Monsieur" had been replaced by "Citoyen," but since the 9th Thermidor the old usage had prevailed once more, in all except official relations. Augereau thought it his duty, in a highly remarkable general order, to recall the attention of the officers of his division to the self-styled Republican rule.

"Either through inadvertence or inconsistency," he said, "a meaningless, barbarous, and inharmonious name, unsupported by etymology, and proscribed by good sense, has been revived by folly; under the auspices of fashion, which is striving to bring it into vogue, it has crossed the Alps, and our ears are shocked with the hissing of this word Monsieur." And in conclusion he added : "Any member of the division who shall henceforth use the word Monsieur, in speech or in writing, on any pretext whatsoever, shall be deprived of his rank and declared incapable of serving in the armies of the Republic."

What must the author of this fine order have thought, some years later, when he heard himself addressed as "Monsieur le Duc" and "your Excellency?" His elevation to that dignity, at all events, did not cause him to lay aside the expletives which adorned his speech.

When in 1797, during the negotiations for peace, the counter-revolution party seemed to prevail in the Legislative Councils, and even to be making its way insidiously into the heart of the Directory itself,

Bonaparte, impelled by motives which do not concern us here, declared his opposition to this party, and offered his support to those members of the Directory who had remained faithful to the Revolution. Addresses to the Government, full of menace against the reactionary party, were drawn up by the several divisions of his army, and he sent Augereau to Paris in reply to the demand of the majority of the Directory that a bold and patriotic general should be placed at their disposal. Bonaparte, on this occasion, killed two birds with one stone; for while Augereau satisfied the given conditions perfectly, his extravagances made his presence in the army a source of uneasiness, and Bonaparte was glad to be rid of him. Moreover, his mediocrity saved Bonaparte from fear of being eclipsed through his momentary elevation into prominence.

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On his arrival at Paris, Augereau showed himself an instrument at once docile and energetic in the hands of the advanced party for the execution of the *coup d'État* of the 18th Fructidor against the party comprising the majority of the Councils and the minority of the Directory. Being appointed commander of the 17th military division, whose head-quarters were at Paris, he strengthened it by the introduction of the troops of the army of the Sambre and Meuse, ranged by Hoche along the road to the capital, including that fine corps of light cavalry commanded by the trusty and energetic General Richepanse. He surrounded the Palace of the Tuileries, and disarmed the constitutional Guard of the Councils. He then became, for the moment, the idol of the advanced party and at the same time the object of caresses on the part of the Monarchists, who were not without hopes of seducing him to their cause. Welcomed in all the salons, in which the social success achieved by Augereau's Hussars—as Richepanse's horse were called—was all the greater because Parisian society had been for several years past deprived of the sight of military uniforms; greeted as one of the heroes of the army of Italy (the credit of whose greatest victories he was not unwilling to take upon himself), the old deserter might well think himself for a time the most important personage in the Republic.

The Directory in its turn began to find his presence embarrassing and, to get rid of him, appointed him Commander-in-Chief of the army of Germany, which had been formed by the combination of the army of the Rhine and Moselle with that of the Sambre and Meuse; so that he by himself thus replaced the two best generals in the French service, with the exception of Bonaparte, viz., Moreau, who had fallen into disgrace, and Hoche, who had succumbed to an inexorable foe. The fiery general of division, as we have seen him in the Pyrenees and in Italy, was utterly incompetent for this exalted position. Such a man shines in the second rank, who is lost in the first!

He exercised his command-in-chief with much petty ostentation. "It was a curious spectacle for the town of Strasburg," Marshal Gouvion Saint-Cyr tells us in his Memoirs, "the appearance of this general covered with embroidery from head to foot—for even his boots were embroidered—going out to walk, surrounded by a crowd of general officers and others who had attached themselves to his fortunes. The soldiers left their quarters to see him pass by—— His wife went out driving in a state coach, such as are used by princes and princesses on great days of ceremony, a great berlin, decorated with gold paintings on a white background; on her drives she was always escorted by a detachment of hussars." What a dream of bliss for the Greek girl (an excellent creature, by the way) who had run away from Naples with the then sub-lieutenant!

Augereau's unfitness for the post of Commander-in-Chief of a large army, the finest indeed in France, was so manifest, that it decided Bonaparte to make peace with Austria. "The best way to preserve ourselves from his mistakes," he said on this occasion, "is to put him in a place where he cannot commit any." When Bonaparte was shortly after obliged, on his way to attend the Congress at Rastadt, to pass through Offenburg, where Augereau had his head-quarters, the latter, instead of paying his respects in person to his former chief, to whom he owed his present position, sent an officer to invite him to lunch with him, and afterwards to witness a grand review. The only answer Bonaparte vouchsafed was to take lunch at a village two leagues beyond Offenburg, passing by

Augereau's house without stopping, despite the entreaties of the aides-de-camp, who ran after his carriage begging him to alight.

Augereau did not long remain in this important post in which he wearied every one by his boastful demeanour, and he was soon relegated to the command of the military division of Perpignan. Nothing was left him of his short-lived grandeur, save the nickname of "General Fructidor," which long clung to him. He was afterwards called to the Council of the Cinq-Cents by the vote of the electors of Haute-Garonne, and there he took his place among the members of the republican *Société du Manège*. It was there that Bonaparte found him on his return from Egypt, when he planned the *coup d'État* of the 18th Brumaire, by which the government of the Directory was overthrown, and the way paved for the establishment, at a later date, of the Empire. Bonaparte took good care not to admit Augereau to his secret counsels, but Augereau did nothing to oppose him, and when Bonaparte had become First Consul, after the success of the *coup d'État,* Augereau came to offer his services, and to remind him of the glorious days of the army of Italy : "What!" he said, "you have gone through dangers and never thought of asking Augereau to go with you!"

This submission gained him in the redistribution of commands for the campaign of 1800 the command of the little Gallo-Batavian army, which was intended to act in the north of Bavaria. In this post of secondary importance, and bound down by precise instructions, Augereau acquitted himself with credit of the task entrusted to him, and even gained a victory over the Austrians at Burg-Eberach, near Nuremberg.

When the First Consul, after the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, disposed large bodies of troops in camps on the coasts of France, both to defend her shores, and also at the same time to threaten England with invasion, Augereau was placed in command of the camp at Bayonne, which was soon after transferred to Brest. He was often summoned to Paris, where the First Consul, remembering his former vagaries in politics, was quite as well pleased to see him as at the head of twenty thousand men in a station far removed from his watchful eye, and in fact he only returned to Brittany to indulge his taste for extravagant expenditure

by giving magnificent receptions to the officers of his corps. He gave moreover, about the same time, some more significant proofs of his generosity. He had remained the friend of Lannes, who had served under his orders in the Pyrenees and in Italy. This same Lannes, while in command of the infantry of the Consular Guard, and a favourite with the First Consul, had been denounced to the latter as having spent three hundred thousand francs in an irregular way in altering and embellishing the uniforms of that Guard. Napoleon, determined at any price to restore order in the administration of the army, and wishing to make an example, did not hesitate to strike his favourite; Lannes was ordered to pay the three hundred thousand francs within a month, on pain of being summoned before a court-martial. After several fruitless appeals, Lannes had no one left to whom he could turn for these three hundred thousand francs, when Augereau, having learnt what had happened, placed the sum at his disposal. Napoleon thought very well of him for this kindly act; it seemed indeed to be quite a matter of course with Augereau, for, some time after, when he was a Marshal of France, he insisted on lending a sum of two hundred thousand francs to one of his colleagues who was in difficulties, and when that colleague's wife begged him to name his rate of interest, he answered : "Madam, a banker draws interest from his money, but when a Marshal of France is fortunate enough to be able to oblige one of his colleagues, he demands no other interest than the pleasure of doing him a service."

* * *

Augereau was included in the eighteen Marshals of the Empire appointed by Napoleon to enhance the majesty of his throne. To judge by the military talents of the many competitors for this dignity, more than one might well have been preferred to Augereau, but when some one made a remark to that effect to Napoleon, he answered : "Have you forgotten, then, that he saved us, and in spite of ourselves, at Castiglione?"

After the coronation festivities, Augereau returned to Brest to give his troops a share of these festivities; the theatre was made the scene not only of several brilliant balls, but also of banquets, at which the

best non-commissioned officers and soldiers of each regiment were present. He delighted in walking round the tables, amusing himself by observing the hearty appetites with which all those honest fellows did honour to the feast. With all his absurdities, his heart was in the right place; he showed himself, says General de Marbot, polite and affectionate towards those around him, and he lived among his aides-de-camp as a father with his children. What a contrast this portrait is to the generally accepted idea of Augereau! It was about this time that he bought the house and estate of La Houssaye, situated in the department of Seine-et-Marne, where Napoleon came to pay him a visit, and where the wife whom he had married in Naples passed away after many years of suffering, during which the Marshal never ceased to show her the most tender signs of affection. It was about this time, too, that he spent a sum of 250,000 francs, given him by the Emperor, in the purchase of the splendid mansion in the Rue de Grenelle, now occupied by the Ministry of Public Instruction. When Napoleon turned against Austria the forces which had been massed for the invasion of England, the camp of Brest became the 7th Corps of the Grand Army; and Augereau had to lead it right across France in order to reach the scene of action. Being directed to move towards the Tyrol, he took no part in the campaign of Austerlitz, but he fought several engagements, and compelled a body of Austrian troops, who had escaped from Ulm, to capitulate at Feldkirch. This affair placed him in the happy position of being able to send several Austrian colours to the Emperor, who received them some days before the battle of Austerlitz.

Next came the war of 1806 against Prussia; the 7th Corps, along with the 5th under the command of Lannes, formed at the beginning of the campaign the left wing of the army. In the movement of concentration which preceded the actual hostilities, the 7th Corps was cantoned at Frankfort. The inhabitants of this town had evinced the most marked ill-will towards the French army. Mistaking what they wished for actual fact, they had, at the very time when the battle of Austerlitz was being fought, spread a report that the Russians had just gained a brilliant and decisive victory, completely annihilating the Grand Army of Napoleon. After the

peace of Presburg the town had continued to be a hotbed of intrigues against France. The Emperor gave orders that the whole of the 7th Corps should be billeted in Frankfort. On the day of its entry, the town was to give a *louis d'or* to every soldier, two to every corporal, three to every sergeant, ten to every sub-lieutenant, and so on. The mess expenses to be borne by the municipality were fixed at 600 francs for the Marshal, 400 for the generals of division, 200 for the generals of brigade, 100 for the colonels. Besides this, a payment of a million francs monthly was to be made to the common fund of the army.

This meant nothing less than ruin to the inhabitants of Frankfort, rich though they were; they sent a deputation to lay their complaints before the Emperor, who gave them the following answer : "You have been labouring under the delusion that not a single Frenchman escaped at Austerlitz ; the Emperor wishes to enable you to count the number composing one single corps of the Grand Army. There are six other corps, and the Guard besides." In their despair the Frankforters turned to Augereau, who appealed in their favour to the Emperor's clemency. "Do what you will!" said Napoleon to the commander of the 7th Corps. The latter then sent the troops into cantonments in the neighbourhood, only keeping his staff with one battalion actually in the town, the inhabitants of which entertained henceforth the warmest gratitude towards him.

Augereau left Frankfort on the 6th of October, and proceeded towards Coburg, the residence of the Field-Marshal Prince of that name, formerly Generalissimo of the armies of the Coalition during the first wars of the Republic. He sent a guard of honour, and showed the utmost respect, to this prince, who deplored the blindness of the King of Prussia.

Placed in the second line, behind Lannes' divisions, the 7th Corps took no part in the brilliant engagement at Saalfeld, that prelude to the ultimate success of the French army, in which Prince Louis of Prussia was killed. In his march on Jena, on the 13th of October, Augereau met and attacked at Kala some remnants of the troops who had been beaten at Saalfeld. After an ineffectual show of resistance, they laid down their arms. The prisoners included Prince Henry's company, in which Augereau had served twenty-two years before, as a private soldier. At that time it was almost

impossible for a Prussian captain to rise to higher rank, unless he were of very distinguished family; as for the sergeants, they were never promoted to the rank of sub-lieutenant. So it happened that the captain and sergeant of this company were still those whom Augereau had known. The reader may picture to himself their amazement on finding themselves in the presence of the sometime private of their company, now a Marshal, and renowned for his brilliant feats of arms. The captain, who recognized him perfectly, spoke to him as if he had never seen him before. Augereau preserved his seeming *incognito*, invited the captain to dinner, seated him near himself, lent him all the money he needed to repair his outfit, and gave him letters of recommendation for France. With the sergeant-major he was less reserved. That sturdy veteran was quite bewildered on seeing the decorations which covered the Marshal's breast, and the numerous staff which attended him. Augereau called him by his name, took him by the hand, and ordered him to be given twenty-five *louis*. There were some soldiers besides, who had been in the company at the same time as Augereau; every one of them received two *louis*.

Augereau's corps played an important part in the battle of Jena. The soldier of the Black Mountain and Castiglione reappeared that day completely in the Marshal of the Empire. Lannes afterwards reproached the Emperor in the warmest terms for not having granted Augereau the place he deserved in the bulletin of the victory—— Here is a curious detail, showing that in war one may be exposed to risk of starvation by victory as well as by defeat. Augereau, having pursued the Prussians as far as Weimar, was lodged with his whole staff in the house of the head-gardener of the Grand Duke. He found nothing to eat there except the plums in the garden and the pine-apples in the green-houses, meagre diet for men who had been on horseback since five o'clock in the morning, and fighting all day long!

After the battle, the 7th Corps proceeded to march on Berlin, and occupied that town for some time. The Marshal there gave a new proof of his kindness of heart. He was lodged outside the town in the Château of Bellevue, which belonged to Prince Ferdinand, the one surviving brother of the Great Frederick, a man bitterly opposed to the war then going

on, and father of Prince Louis, who had been killed at Saalfeld. Augereau went to visit this worthy old man in his palace at Berlin. Prince Ferdinand told him that his second and now only son, Prince Augustus, was in a column of prisoners at the gates of the town, having been taken at Boitzenburg by Murat's cavalry; and that he longed to embrace him, but was prevented, as was also the Princess his wife, by the infirmities of age, from going to see him. Augereau sent one of his aides-de-camp to bring the young Prince, and then, after witnessing with great emotion the tearful embraces lavished on the son by his venerable parents, he went to the Emperor and obtained his permission for Prince Augustus to remain a prisoner on parole in his father's palace.

The 7th Corps was then in such splendid condition that after reviewing it at Berlin the Emperor said to the Marshal :

" Your corps by itself is worth the whole Prussian army."

It was indeed one of Augereau's distinguishing qualities to take good care of the troops put under his command. Napoleon and Marmont have both done him justice in this respect in their memoirs. "He maintained order and discipline among his soldiers," Napoleon says of him, "and he was beloved by them." "He took a keen interest in the welfare of his troops, and was genial in his habitual relations with them," says Marmont.

While Murat's cavalry with the divisions of Bernadotte, Soult, and Ney completed the dispersion of the remains of the Prussian army, Davout, Augereau, and Lannes advanced towards the Vistula to meet the Russians. The country which the 7th Corps had to traverse on that march was gloomy and poor beyond all description. Scanty victuals, no wine, disgusting beer, such was the ordinary fare of the soldiers, and their usual quarters were hovels which they shared with their hosts' cattle and pigs. "They call that a country!" they exclaimed, speaking of the Poles and Poland.

The passage of the Vistula was effected without difficulty; not so that of the Ukra, which was attempted during the last few days of the year 1806. When Augereau, after marching in frightful weather along roads broken up by the thaw, presented himself before Kolozomb, intending to cross the river there, he found that the Russians had destroyed the



ENTRÉE DE S.M. L'EMPEREUR À BERLIN.

L'Empereur a fait hier (27 Octobre 1806) une entrée solennelle à Berlin. Il était environné du prince de Neufchatel, des maréchaux Davoust et Augereau, de son grand maréchal du palais, de son écuyer et de ses aides-de-camp. Le maréchal Lefebvre ouvrait la marche à la tête de la garde impériale à pied; les cuirassiers de la division Nansouty étaient en bataille sur le chemin. L'Empereur marchait entre les grenadiers et les chasseurs à cheval de sa garde.

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Extrait du XXIe Bulletin.

A Paris chez Ostervald l'aîné, Rue du petit Lion S. Sulpice N° 20

bridge. But the enemy had neglected, on their retreat, to burn a timber store which stood on the left bank. The sappers of the 7th Corps took advantage of this to restore the bridge as best they could, and the sharpshooters of the 14th regiment immediately advanced upon it. Colonel Savary, who commanded this regiment, crossed the bridge astride on the planks laid edgeways to receive the platform, but scarcely had he set foot on the right bank, when a Cossack pierced him to the heart with a lance-thrust and galloped away. This was a severe loss, Colonel Savary had to all appearance a brilliant military future before him.

The whole of the 7th Corps was soon on the right bank of the Ukra, and it marched through the mud towards Golymin, where, on the 28th of December, one of the most confused of battles took place between the Russians on one side, and Murat, Augereau, and Davout on the other. The enemy retired at night, leaving their guns stuck fast in the mire, in the possession of the French. A fine, icily cold rain was falling. Augereau and Murat could find no better shelter for themselves and their respective staffs than a large stable, the door of which had been torn away. Having eaten nothing all day, they stretched themselves out to sleep on the litter with which the ground was plentifully covered. The marshals and generals placed themselves far inside, away from the door. The small fry of the staff, that is to say, the lieutenants and sub-lieutenants, lay down before the door, exposed to wind and rain. At daybreak they found a not unwelcome compensation for their woes. One of Murat's servants tried to effect an entry into the stable, which of course was impossible; forced to abandon this intention, he begged one of the young aides-de-camp to inform the Prince that breakfast was about to appear, and to take him some provisions to fill up the interval, namely, a goose, and some bread and wine. The lieutenants agreed that the sleeping marshals wanted nothing before breakfast; accordingly, they demolished the food with right good will, washing it down with excellent wine. This subaltern's trick escaped detection, as the breakfast was not long in coming.

The army was soon compelled by bad weather to go into winter quarters. The 7th Corps was cantoned in the neighbourhood of Plock

in villages, whose inhabitants, an incredibly filthy set of beings, dwelt in plank huts. Augereau established his head-quarters in a wooden house rejoicing in the imposing name of the Castle of Chritsko.

The days of the 7th Corps were numbered, the hour of its catastrophe was approaching. The Russians, by a sudden onslaught, had surprised the left of the French army, to whose assistance Napoleon had hastened with all the forces at his disposal; in pursuing the enemy, who retreated before him, he had allowed his army corps to become somewhat dispersed. Finding the Russian army massed in a strong position at Eylau, he attacked it with the two corps of Soult and Augereau, the Imperial Guard, and Murat's cavalry. Soult's divisions maintained the fight with difficulty under a fearful cannonade, when Davout appeared on the left flank of the Russians, attacked them vigorously, and forced them to retire. They then turned all their efforts against this new assailant; with the view of effecting a diversion, Napoleon ordered Augereau, who, though seriously ill, was riding at the head of his troops, to march against the enemy's centre. At the moment when the two divisions of the 7th Corps began to move, echeloned in columns of battalions, snow began to fall in heavy flakes, driven by the wind in our soldiers' faces. It darkened the air, causing the van to move in the wrong direction. The Russian general brought up rapidly seventy-two pieces of artillery, till then held in reserve, and the columns were received by them with a terrific volley of grape-shot, whilst a large force of cavalry charged them in flank. The infantry of the 7th Corps made its way back, broken, but not disorderly, through the midst of the enemy's cavalry to the cemetery of Eylau, where the Emperor was stationed. Out of the 12,000 men it numbered at starting, scarcely 3,000 remained fit for service. One of the two generals of division, Desjardins, was killed, the other, Heudelet, was little better, being severely wounded. Augereau himself had received a serious wound, but filled with despair at his failure, and at the destruction of his fine army corps, he gave no thought to his wound, and burst into bitter lamentions. "Your Poland," he said to Napoleon, who tried to calm him with soothing words, "for which you are sacrificing these brave grenadiers, is not worth the blood of a single one of them."

The remains of his two divisions stood near, under the command of a major, for all the generals and colonels had been disabled. The whole of the artillery had been brought back, without the loss of a single gun. When the wind ceased to blow the snow about, a ghastly scene was illumined by the daylight; a whole army corps stretched on the ground. A mere handful of men, surrounded by the enemy, were still fighting on an eminence which had been held against the enemy since the beginning of the movement, and the defenders of which had not observed the retreat of the corps. They were the two battalions of the 14th regiment, and despite the bold front that they presented to the enemy, they must inevitably succumb, for it was impossible to help them. The Emperor, much concerned for the fate of these brave fellows, ordered Augereau to send them an aide-de-camp with instructions that they should make their way towards the cemetery, from whence a brigade of cavalry would advance to meet them. The mission was perilous, for the Cossacks occupied all the ground the messenger would have to cross. An officer started; he was seen defending himself with his sabre against the horsemen who surrounded him, then he was lost from sight in the pell-mell, and was not heard of again. A second officer took his place, and met with the same fate. The third was no other than Marbot, then a lieutenant; he was mounted on a fiery and vigorous animal, which was in the habit of biting and attacking with its forefeet all who came near it. Marbot made no attempt to defend himself against any possible assailants, but dashed with all his horse's speed towards the hill, which he reached safely.

But by this time it was impossible for the 14th to execute the Emperor's order. The mass of the Russian infantry was now no more than a hundred paces off. "You see," said the major who had been in command since the death of Colonel Savary, "we can do nothing more! But take our eagle at least, and carry it back to the Emperor, and tell him that we have defended it to the last extremity." At this moment a cannon ball carried away the aide-de-camp's cap, breaking his chin strap with violence. Marbot, stunned by the blow, lost consciousness, and was surrounded by the Russian soldiers, one of whom had already given

him a bayonet thrust, when his mare, wounded herself and rendered furious, threw herself on the assailant, bit him savagely, and carried off her unconscious rider at headlong speed, to a point far from the enemy, where he was afterwards found and saved as by a miracle. As for the soldiers of the 14th regiment they were killed to a man. Next day their bodies were found stretched out, still forming the square. Thirty-one officers had perished and were buried in the same trench, marked by a simple monument to perpetuate the remembrance of their heroic sacrifice; the Russians occupying Eylau a fortnight later respected this monument, so that the French army found it again in the following June, on the eve of the battle of Friedland.

The 7th Corps ceased to exist; the Emperor decided that it should be dissolved, the remains of its component regiments being distributed among the other army corps; they were afterwards brought up to the effective standard by reinforcements from France. Augereau went to Berlin to recover from his wound, and returned to France discontented, embittered, and prematurely aged. He was then fifty, but in such a life as he had led, the years count at least double. The title of Duc de Castiglione, which was bestowed on him then with a handsome allowance, consoled him to some extent, but did not restore his old energy, which he had lost beneath the snows of Eylau.

* * *

When Napoleon started for Spain in October, 1808, he inquired if the state of Augereau's health would permit him to accompany him; Augereau was compelled to answer in the negative. Next year he was appointed Governor of Catalonia, replacing Gouvion Saint-Cyr, who had fallen into disgrace; he reached that land just in time to receive the capitulation of Gerona, which his predecessor had besieged for six months; but he soon shewed himself so incompetent for this new command that he had to be recalled and replaced by Marshal Macdonald, who, by the way, was not much more successful than he.

At the time of the Russian expedition of 1812, the Emperor entrusted Augereau with the command of a reserve army corps, with which he



AUGEREAU

occupied Berlin and Prussia, and which was gradually dissolved by the various destinations assigned to the respective divisions composing it.

During the second part of the campaign of 1813, Augereau was put at the head of a new reserve corps organized at Würzburg. In the organization of this corps and in his march to join the Grand Army, he shewed a want of expedition which might well have drawn a rebuke from the Emperor upon him. But Napoleon, who faced bad fortune with unchanging serenity, shewed himself more indulgent than he had ever been before towards the faults of his lieutenants. In his reception of Augereau he contented himself with saying : "When shall I find again the Augereau of Castiglione?" "When you give him back the soldiers of the army of Italy," was the Marshal's reply. Napoleon smiled. But Augereau had atoned for his lack of diligence by overthrowing a force of the enemy which had attempted to bar his way; and there were reminiscences of the glorious past of the Augereau of Castiglione in his desperate gallantry on the fields of Wachau and Leipzig, but these were the last. In 1814 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the army of Lyons, there to see the shipwreck of his honour and his reputation.

He might have done much, he might perhaps have done all that was needed to save France; to the troops already collected under his command, the Emperor had added ten thousand well-trained soldiers from the army of Aragon, formed in the excellent school of Marshal Suchet. But he failed to make use of them to attack the flanks and rear of the grand army of Bohemia, which was marching on Paris through the valleys of the Aube and Seine. In vain did Napoleon strive to awaken in the soul of his old lieutenant that energy which he thought was merely dormant, but which was in reality dead. He wrote him the most urgent letters, one of which is still famous.

"What!" said the Emperor, "six hours after the first reinforcements from Spain have reached you, you are not yet in the field! Six hours' rest is surely enough for them!..... I command you, within twelve hours of the receipt of this letter, to put yourself in the field. If you are still the Augereau of Castiglione, retain your command; if your sixty years weigh heavy on you, resign it into the hands of the oldest of your

general officers. The country is threatened and in danger, it can only be saved by daring and hearty energy, not by vain dallying..... Be the first in action. This is no longer a time for you to act as of late years, you must return to the vigour and resolution of '93! When the French see your plume in the front, and when they see you expose yourself first to the musket shots, you will do what you like with them."

Augereau remained deaf to these noble exhortations. In spite of the heroism displayed by his troops, he let himself be hemmed in at Lyons, from whence he was soon driven and forced to retreat to the Dauphiné. He had meanwhile announced his determination to drive out the enemy in a bombastic proclamation. Then, as a fresh instance of the eternal truth of the fable of the dying lion, of the fixed law that every great power, as it falls, receives an ass's kick from one of those who have bowed most humbly beneath its yoke,—it was the veteran Augereau who undertook to give this kick to Napoleon, vanquished and fallen from the summit of his greatness.

In a new proclamation dated from Valence, he announced that the Senate, interpreting the will of the people, who had grown weary of the tyrannical yoke of Napoleon Bonaparte, had now declared him deposed. "Soldiers," he added, "you are freed from your oaths..... by the abdication of a man, who, after immolating millions of victims to his cruel ambition, has shown that he does not know how to die like a soldier.....;" the rest was in the same tone. After publishing this proclamation he started for Paris, and on the way his carriage met that which was carrying Napoleon, now sovereign of the Isle of Elba, into exile. The ex-Emperor stopped, got down from his carriage, and, forgetting how he had reproached the commander of the army of Lyons, threw his arms round him and pressed him to his heart, speaking gently and kindly to him. Augereau hid the embarrassment he must have felt at that moment under a bearing of coarse familiarity, affecting to treat him who had been his sovereign the day before as an equal, nay, even patronizing him, saying that he had wrought his own destruction. After leaving him, Napoleon heard of his proclamation of Valence, and doubtless regretted that he had embraced the fallen hero of Castiglione.

The Government of the Restoration made Augereau a Knight of Saint Louis, a peer of France, and commander of the 14th military division, the head-quarters of which were at Rouen. Napoleon, on landing in the Gulf of Juan, on the 1st of March, 1815, issued an address to the people of France, in which he expressed himself thus :

"Two men coming from our ranks (he referred to Marmont and Augereau) have betrayed our laurels, their country, their prince, their benefactor..... The defection of the Duc de Castiglione left Lyons defenceless to our enemies....."

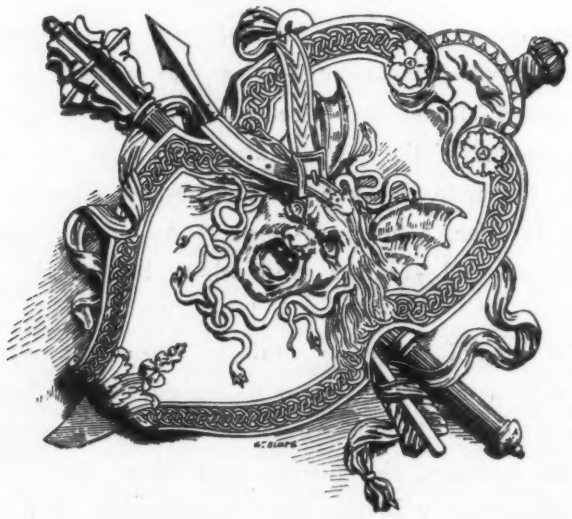
Whatever Napoleon may have said to enflame men's minds, Augereau had been no traitor; old and worn-out, he had shown himself inept and lacking in energy. He replied to the terrible reproaches of the Emperor by a fresh palinode. Addressing the soldiers under his orders, he said : "The Emperor is in the capital. For a moment fortune was unfaithful to him..... But his rights are indefeasible; he claims them again to-day, and they have never been more sacred for us."

Napoleon refused Augereau's services, declined to see him, and ordered him to retire to his estate of La Houssaye. It was there that he died on the 12th of June, 1816, after being reinstated by the Government of the Second Restoration in the dignity of peer of France, but without receiving any military appointment—— He was already forgotten by all, and his death passed almost unnoticed. The *Moniteur officiel* contained a simple announcement of the fact, adding that "he was attended in his last moments by his wife (he had married again after the death of his Greek wife), his brother, Lieutenant-General Augereau, and his servants, who were almost all old soldiers, and whom he is said to have loaded with benefits."

Such was the life of Augereau, full of hazardous adventures at its outset, brilliant with a martial lustre at its apogee, but sullied by unworthy weakness in its decline. As for Augereau himself, good-natured, trivial, kindly towards his soldiers, the people, and those about him, combining the tricks of a charlatan with the fiery impetuosity of a valiant soldier, gathering money and sowing it broadcast with equal facility, what was it that he lacked, how was it that he failed to gain as much glory as

certain generals of his time, whose talents were not superior to his, and who did not render such brilliant services to their country? He lacked, above all, elevation of character, and the tact which education gives. Others began as low as he, and were as far as he from being brought up in the lap of luxury, but while still young they had been formed in the great school of war; a laudable intention had led them to acquire by assiduous labour the instruction which fate had refused to their early youth, and their hearts had been raised by contact with danger, excited by patriotism and the desire to conquer. With Augereau, thrice a deserter before he volunteered in the service of the Republic, the first impressions of the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, far from being effaced by the early events in his career, had been only more emphasized by contact with adventurers doubtless far worse than himself. In fine, the story of his life contains this great lesson, that neither courage, intelligence, shrewdness, nor anything else can take the place of loftiness of ideas and nobility of character.

THOUMAS,
General.



TEMPTATION (*)

(SECRET CORRESPONDENCE FROM ODETTE TO HERSELF)

June 20th.

We met again last Thursday evening. The weekly dinner seemed a good opportunity; I thought the risks would be less and my self-possession greater, if we saw each other first in a room full of people. All through the meal I behaved with much dignity and some coldness to Max. I flirted a little more than usual with his friend Paul Saluces, I pretended not to understand his whispered: "You have punished me too severely." In short, I had every reason to be pleased with myself. The keenest observer could have detected nothing unusual in me, though my heart was beating as if it would burst, and I felt a consciousness of guilty complicity between us every time Max glanced my way. But defeat was in store for me by and by.

When we leave the table, Claire and I make it a habit to light two little scented cigarettes. This was an innovation of mine, adopted by Claire after much persuasion, and arguments founded on the excellent results of the eighteenth century *Jeu des Cafés*. In those days, though smoking

(*) See *Art and Letters* for May and June, vol. II., p. 121 and 252.

was not customary, people were just as fond of their ease as now. Madame d'Épinay has immortalized the charming *abandon* of those gatherings at which women, anxious to retain their men, masqueraded as coffee-sellers, so as to do away with the restraint and ceremony of the drawing-room, going so far even as to don the livery of their humble sisters. Claire and I appear in our every-day garb; but we arrange the little back drawing-room with small tables and lamps, and turn it into the cosiest of smoking-rooms. It opens on to a large balcony with a striped awning, where it is delightful to sit in summer. And summer has been here for the last week. The *habitués* of the house call this delicious retreat "Cairo"—a name suggested by its Eastern style of decoration.

In "Cairo" every one does exactly as he pleases. As our guests sip their coffee, one glances over the paper, another dips into a new book on the table, a third dashes off a sketch on a sheet of paper that lies ready to his hand, a fourth helps himself to the refreshments placed on a sort of buffet apart, while there are always three or four who group themselves round two indulgent women, who, seated work in hand, neither exact attention nor repel it by an over-absorption in their embroideries. As to me, I think I very seldom make a stitch with the wool I pass mechanically to and fro. I remember my poor James used to excuse me to his mother for my ignorance of needlework by saying I was one of the lilies of the Gospel, which had their uses, though they neither toiled nor span. On this particular evening, I was making rather less progress than usual with my work. I was uneasily observant of Max's sulky silence. He sat apart, and seemed to be scribbling at the corner of a table, as if he were working in his own room.

After exchanging a word or two with a group near him, he had taken up this most unusual attitude, without coming near me at all, or addressing me in any way. At first I felt relieved that my fears seemed so little likely to be realized, then I gradually gave myself up to a feeling of intense irritation, a sort of angry curiosity which almost drove me to make him some advance. Claire looked completely puzzled. After having addressed her husband two or three times without getting any

answer, after having rallied him on his neglect of his duties as host, she rose, on the pretext of taking him a cup of tea, and resting her hand on his shoulder, glanced at the page before him.

"What a curious beginning!" she said, laughing. "Odette, you who are so learned, tell me, what do you call those little quotations written at the beginning of a chapter to point the moral?"

"Epigraphs, do you mean?" I replied, paying a great deal of attention to my embroidery.

"Yes. Well, this is the epigraph of Max's latest composition: 'Her hair is like the young shoots of the palm trees, and black as the raven,' and, 'Thou hast ravished my heart with a hair of thy head.' Hasn't that an Oriental flavour worthy of 'Cairo?' What is it all about?" shaking him by the arm to make him wake up and answer.

"Something very old indeed," he answers indifferently. "Those are the words of Solomon, the wisest of Kings."

"And why are you evoking Solomon this evening?"

"Oh, I wanted a theme, upon which to embroider variations."

"And may we see the variations?" I ask, with a forced smile.

I was trembling lest Claire's suspicions should be roused. Foolishly enough—for of what could the quotation remind her, save a prank of her little daughter's, that she had no doubt quite forgotten?

"Come and look, dear Madame, if you care to," answers Max drily, a ring of defiance in his voice.

"Come, let us see," says M. Saluces, detaching himself from the group of smokers.

He took the paper, which Max had covered with a firm unerring pen, without a single correction or erasure, and read aloud two strophes of a magnificent impetuous lyric; then, pausing, he made a significant exclamation under his breath, finished the poem to himself, and after a few minutes of silence that seemed to me like hours, remarked: "You are not going to make me believe that this is an improvisation. You have never written anything better. Splendid! It's as strong and as voluptuous as Swinburne."

Paul Saluces has written some famous criticisms of English poetry,

of which he has made a special study. He places Swinburne above Tennyson, for reasons which make me place him below.

"Do you admire Swinburne, Mrs. Nevil?"

"I have not read him," I reply with a sudden impulse of British prudery.

"Really? You have a treat in store then," he observes incredulously. "But meanwhile, these verses may serve as a makeshift. Swinburne has written nothing finer, nor for the matter of that, more reprehensible," adds M. Saluces, with a sarcastic smile.

I was on the point of exclaiming: "Then don't read them!" But my curiosity got the better of me, and on second thoughts, it seemed more dignified to pretend indifference. I contented myself with unfurling my fan, and holding it up to my face with a significant gesture, to hide my burning cheeks. Oh! it was no Michelangelesque or even Petrarchesque sonnet! The fiction of intellectual love melted away once for all. I felt that I could never forgive Max the indescribable torture he inflicted on me by forcing me to hear his frenzied ode under such conditions. It was, in fact, an avowal, made in the presence of half a dozen men, and of his wife, to whom the outrage was even greater than to me. A dozen times I was on the point of interrupting, of protesting, of rushing from the room. I felt as if I were set up naked and defenceless to be a gazing-stock to all the world. It seemed to me that all the company must be laughing at my confusion through the fan that trembled in my hand. The fire of a pair of implacable eyes blazed on me, took possession of me. "You will have to hear me now," thought my tormentor, "there is no escape for you. You must listen to the end." What a moment of shame and transport, of pride and humiliation! The verses ended amidst loud murmurs of applause. *I* had inspired them, they were dedicated to *me,* they were *mine,* but truly, the poet's love was cruel!

His friends congratulated him eagerly. Even Claire observed in her soft, tranquil voice, that the poem was very beautiful. I turned upon her angrily.

"How can you allow your husband to write such things?"

She looked up, her needle suspended in the air, a naïve astonishment in her clear eyes.

"What! do you really mean that, Odette? Why, it was you who laughed me out of my silly prejudices, and made me——"

"Yes, yes," I interrupted, feverishly, "but this is too much! This passes everything!"

"Do you think so? Well, it seems to me no worse than many others. After all, it is only literature, it is not addressed to any one in particular." She went on comfortably with her embroidery. "Féline is fair, and this is some Eastern woman. The Queen of Sheba, perhaps."

Thus my own counsels have turned against me, leaving me defenceless. The compliments were succeeded by a few criticisms. They began to dissect the masterpiece, and suggest a fault here and there. I hated them all for laying sacrilegious hands on what belonged to me, and seemed to me a living thing. Leaving Claire to enjoy her husband's success, I passed out on the balcony to breathe the fresh air, and try to steady my nerves after the shock. The avenue lay silent below in the calm night air. From the height where I stood, I saw sharply defined against the starlit sky the slender minarets of a building, commonplace enough by day, but glorified by the moonlight. A gentle breeze swept over the neighbouring gardens, wafting up that intoxicating scent of Parisian acacia-blossoms, so like the perfume of orange flowers. Suddenly a hand was laid on mine, and lips that brushed my cheek whispered: "Forgive me. I have frightened you, and pained you. I am a coward, a brute, a savage. But why won't you let me tell you once for all that I love you?"

Those words, once uttered, can never be unsaid. Max will repeat them again and again, till no other words will have the same interest, the same eloquence to me. And I long, yet fear to listen to them. I feel myself borne away on a torrent, the waters of which I cannot hope will subside, and which will land me I know not where. Alas! I know not even where I wish to be cast!

July 3rd.

Clairette is again to the fore, a baleful little Fate! She has been

tiresome enough to catch the measles, like half the children in Paris this year. Her mother, of course, never leaves her, and I am left without a protector just when I most need one. Of course I have to go and enquire for the little invalid. When I stay away, her father brings me news of her. The bulletins are not alarming. The affection is a very slight one, and means nothing more than a week's imprisonment with soothing drinks. Is it really necessary that her mother should condemn herself to the same captivity? Really, when a woman is so completely the slave of her children, she can hardly expect to keep her husband's affection, and perhaps her sufferings at its loss would not be very acute. Consolation lies ready to her hand. Clairette would provide it. There are times when my friend exasperates me, virtuous as she is, or perhaps even for that very reason. One can hardly expect a man of genius to cast all the wealth of his heart and intellect at the feet of a woman who appreciates neither!

Max has gradually given me his entire confidence. He does Claire ample justice—he knows I could never listen to a word against her—but he classes her, with a touch of disdain, among those women who are made for marriage. And no enthusiasm, he declares, can survive the monotonies of marriage. He argues that nearly every great poet or artist has lived in a home where he has been looked upon as an ordinary mortal, partly because he can there only half reveal himself. But shrouded in a triple veil, haloed by rays of glory, raised aloft on a throne of gold whence she dispenses happiness and inspiration, the woman of the poet's choice reigns apart. She it is he worships, sings, immortalizes for future generations, who join her name with his; she it is who, in the noblest and perhaps—for all is wrapped in sacred mystery—in the tenderest sense also, is his mistress.

Thus it has ever been and ever will be. No vow can hold together two souls; they are free, no matter in what social chains a certain proportion of the human race has agreed to bind itself. Above this fettered community, the poet rises as on wings, and claims exclusive rights. It is his privilege, his divine privilege to think, to love, and to live for his Muse, who is nearly always a woman. But—will not the

day come when the woman will be commanded to lay aside her Muse's veil, and to step down from her throne of gold? I ask myself the question in terror, not daring to pronounce it. He would probably answer: "What matter, if henceforth the love she inspires is deeper, and the worship unabated?"

July 8th.

I really don't know why I should be troubled by such pangs of conscience, for I honestly do all I can to keep Max within proper bounds. I insist on his speaking no more of a passion that I affect to believe a mere passing caprice. I have proposed a fresh compact of friendship. But alas! he takes advantage of it to pour out the most dangerous confidences! He talks incessantly of his stormy past, and his confession of by-gone passion for other women is an indirect avowal of his love for me. He gives me so plainly to understand that if I would, I might in a moment blot out all these reminiscences for ever! With cruel clairvoyance he makes some passing comparison, lets fall some careless phrase that makes me rage with retrospective jealousy, jealousy that he soothes at once with some perilously tender speech, bringing the conversation back again on forbidden ground. It is my curiosity mainly, I think, that leads me into these pitfalls. I cannot resist the pleasure or the anguish of probing the depths of that stormy heart, which neither Claire nor any other woman bound to him in the name of law and of religion could ever fill. As a girl she attracted him by the sweetness and mystery of her virginal charm; when once the riddle was read, he saw in her only a graceful housewife, a matron absorbed in family cares, who no longer appealed to his poetic imagination.

He might perhaps be capable of constancy, were he free; but he frets in the bonds of a moral obligation, like a very Pegasus in harness. It was my petulant outbreak against the claims of duty, as they are understood in England, that first revealed to him how akin we were. If I might believe him our only manifest duty is to cast aside absurd conventions, and be happy by braving them together. The first time that Max talked to me in this strain, I thought he was going to ask me to fly

with him to the end of the world, and in my agitation, I stammered out the name of Claire.

"Claire!" he echoed, in a tone of astonishment. "But what difference would it make to Claire? She is quite happy, after her fashion. What more do you want for Claire?"

I saw that I had made a mistake. My heart seemed to contract with sudden pain, and then I understood.

What he wants is only to come and unburthen himself to me of all he cannot say to Claire. What he longs for is appreciation, stimulus, encouragement; he asks only to be allowed to love as he has never loved before, he says; to be my slave, tender, but respectful. There is nothing criminal in all this, and if I refuse to accept this noble trust, who can say whether he may not fall under some influence infinitely more harmful to Claire?

If I judge Claire aright, she will, in fact, hardly perceive the part I play in her husband's life. Only a day or two ago she declared again that he had never been kinder, more affectionate to her than now. And, by the way—why if I am really bent on respecting my friend's rights, and reigning from such a sublime elevation—why was this assurance not quite pleasant to me? I must keep strict watch over myself, and smother any such illogical impulses. All will be well, if I carefully hold to my programme of exalted friendship. Other feelings will evaporate harmlessly in poetry. And poetry no longer offends Claire.

July 16th.

If some catastrophe comes about, it certainly will be Clairette's fault. She has got over the measles, but has come downstairs pale, thin, and languid. The doctor strongly recommends change of air, and it is decided that the move to Vertpré shall take place at once.

"Promise that you will come with us," entreated Claire.

For a moment I hesitated. The prospect seemed to me fraught with dangers. I thought of the long summer days spent under one roof with Max, far from all those distractions that in Paris prevent even people most desirous of each other's company from being too much together.

I thought of the familiarity bred of daily intercourse, of the influence of glowing sunsets and tender twilights, balmy mornings and drowsy afternoons, the whole set in a framework of verdure and of flowers. And I was silent.

"Ah, I see what it is," said Claire. "You think it will be so dull. And certainly you would be sometimes quite alone with me. Max has often to go to Paris, on business."

"Oh, well then, I will come!" I exclaim.

"Thank you," says M. Rénal. "I see you accept when you find you are not likely to be troubled with me."

"I only meant," I explained, "that if Claire wants me to keep her company, if I can be of any use to her——"

"You are always of use, you know you are our good angel," interrupts my poor little friend.

Max got up carelessly from his arm-chair, and began to move about the room.

He approached me, and bending down to take a book from the table where I was sitting, whispered :

"Of course, if you spend the summer with us, I shall not stir from Vertpré."

And the terrible part of it all was, that I could not keep my joy out of my face—the joy I felt at having given my promise irretrievably.

M. Rénal is to start at once to make certain necessary arrangements. He will come back and fetch us in a day or two. Vertpré is only about sixty miles from Paris, the journey is less than three hours.

July 17th.

I thought he had gone. I was at home in the evening, and sitting down at the piano, I began to try over a pretty melody that his friend, Cramer, had composed for a copy of Max's verses, written out for me by himself, which I placed before me.

"Sur ton sein pâle mon cœur dort
D'un sommeil doux comme la mort." (*)

(*) Balzac, when he wanted a sonnet, borrowed one from Théophile Gautier. We freely follow this illustrious example, and steal from a contemporary poet, Jean Lahor. (*L'Illusion*, 1 vol. Lemerre, 1888.)

I did not hear the opening of the door behind me nor the sound of footsteps on the carpet. I sang softly :

"Mort exquise, mort parfumée
Du souffle de la bien-aimée,
Sur ton sein pâle mon cœur dort——"

Suddenly I felt his arms round me, his lips upon my neck. I sprang to my feet, but he drew me more closely to him, and this time I made no effort to free myself. No, I have no illusions now as to what awaits me at Vertpré! He loves me with no intellectual love, but with the passion common alike to the man of genius and the savage. And I—— Oh! after my emotion—— the wild beating of my heart against his—— my incoherent words, for I know not what I said—— surely now he cannot but believe that I love him.

July 20th.

He had gone away to speak to Claire. And as I sat waiting for their return in her little blue room—a room that reminds one rather too much of a chapel (I hate those clouds of muslin over pale blue), a thought rose up in my mind that has been pursuing me ever since. "If you go to Vertpré," said conscience, "if you spend all those weeks in the same house with him, your strength of purpose will evaporate day by day, until at last you have offended past forgiveness against that innocent and confiding creature, who trusts you as her second self."

Claire insists more and more strongly on all the good my presence in the house has brought about. She calls me, laughingly, the good fairy. She declares I have taught her the secrets by which an intelligent woman keeps her husband's affection. Without my help, she could never have known the peace and happiness she now enjoys. And she goes on to say how perfectly delightful it would be if I would finally make up my mind to settle in Paris. She has a great project in her head that she has been talking over with Max. It is evident that I have worked the conversion of that enemy of womankind, Paul Saluces. He admires me very much; more significant still, he is even a little afraid of me! He who inspires so much awe in others! Paul Saluces has a good



private fortune; he makes a lot of money by his books! How charming it would be to see me the wife of Max's greatest friend!

There is surely nothing under the sun to equal a very good woman for sheer blindness and stupidity. I listen to poor Claire's lucubrations with a mingling of anger and pity in my heart; I despise her one minute, and hate myself for it the next. She talked in a low tone, to avoid waking her child, whose head was resting against her knee. Clairette, still weak from her illness, had been playing with her doll on the floor, and, overcome by the warmth of the July day, had fallen asleep. A ray of sunshine, softened by the white silk blind, fell through the half-open *persiennes* and played round her little pale face and parted lips. She breathed softly and regularly, as if in a deep slumber. Suddenly she opened a pair of large pathetic eyes, and fixed them steadily on mine. The limpid look went straight to my heart, stabbing it with a sharp pang of remorse, and laying bare depths that terrified me. "Are you worthy of all the love and confidence lavished on you?" it seemed to say.

I felt that I had been about to rob this young mother and her child. The scene of last night came back upon me with shame no longer tempered by a momentary rapture. I felt that the decisive hour had come, the turning-point, after which it would be no longer possible to draw back. I might still choose between crime and duty, but presently it would be too late. I should reach the stage in which one abjures all responsibility, and becomes the tempest-tossed plaything of Fate. I might yet save myself; I might disappear before Max's return, never to see him again, leaving him to his wife and daughter. Was it only the effect of my excited imagination, or were the childish eyes full of earnest supplication? The mother talked on softly, absorbed in her theme, but I heard nothing that she said. My heart was answering Clairette's pleading eyes. Bending down, I laid my hand gently on her eyelids to close them, when, to my intense surprise, the child, who was by no means prodigal of caresses to me as a rule, drew my hand down to her lips, kissed it, and fell asleep again with a smile. The wolf caressed by the lamb might have shared my feelings at the moment. A strange

new strength seemed given me. I made up my mind that Max must not find me there on his return. But what reason can I give for leaving, even to Claire? And why do I feel an involuntary pleasure in the difficulty of inventing a sufficient excuse?

July 22nd.

I must needs believe in a Providence, after all; a hostile and irritating force it seems too, just now!

I had not been able to find any reasonable pretext, but Fate has furnished me with one this morning. My mother-in-law is dangerously ill. I received the news after a stormy night, during which I managed to persuade myself that I was the victim of a ridiculous hallucination; that Clairette's eyes had expressed nothing more extraordinary than an intense desire to sleep; that I had seen my own thoughts reflected in them, the thoughts of an absurdly scrupulous person. Once more I felt proudly capable of saying to the wave: "Thus far shalt thou come, and no further." But the morning had brought this strange coincidence, that seemed like an offer of help from above, and again I recognized my own weakness. I am superstitious, I know, but my instincts are to be trusted. Reasoning only dims my perceptions; my first impulses are always right. For the second time I felt myself driven forward, reluctant but unresisting, in a road which I must follow without turning to the right or to the left, no matter how painful my steps. I went to Claire, told her of my mother-in-law's state, and said she had asked to see me without delay.

"Oh, what a disappointment!" exclaimed my friend. (I can call her so again with a clear conscience.) "Cannot you wait twenty-four hours? Max will be back to-morrow; at least you will be able to bid him good-bye."

Her words put the coping-stone on my resolution. If Max comes back to me, I shall forget my mother-in-law's illness and her pretended wish to see me, and I shall become a coward again, I know. So I answer that there is no time to lose, that it is useless to say good-bye, that the sooner I go, the sooner I shall be back with them, and that I shall join them again at Vertpré.

"Will you promise?" says Claire, flinging her arms round my neck, "I will only let you go on that condition."

And I promise with all the will in life to keep my word. After all, I may perhaps keep it. The step I am about to take may not be absolutely final. Max will not suppose it is. I shall leave Claire to explain my flight to him. I may come back in a week or two, and take up the thread where I dropped it, if it so pleases me. I am only snatching a little time for reflection, just as I did once before—oh! how long ago it seems, I have lived through so much since—when Lord Melton asked me to be his wife. Poor Lord Melton! Heaven defend me from finding him waiting to receive me on the other side of the water! That would be the last straw.

Let me consider the situation. Either the crisis I am passing through at the present moment is due entirely to my own morbid timidity, and I shall presently come back to Paris, laughing at my fears, or I shall have the proud satisfaction of feeling that I have played the heroine of romance, and have sacrificed a splendid future to an impossible passion.

Three months ago, I arrived full of hopes and illusions, my heart free and light as that of a girl of twenty, knowing that I might any day marry the best of good fellows, abundantly blessed with this world's goods. And I have wrecked all these fair prospects for love of the man I am flying from now. You have not played your cards well, my poor Odette! And yet, strange to say, your one consolation in the whole matter is the injury you have inflicted on yourself. You feel that you have been moved by no sordid motives, and that you have expiated your offence up to a certain point.

July 30th.

I have yet one last weakness to confess. I went into Max's room, and slipped between the pages of one of his favourite books a spray of jasmine that I had worn in my hair. When will he find it there? And if he finds it will he remember his own words, I wonder?—that the jasmine is my flower, the flower most like me, pale, and fragile, and passionate, beaming like a tremulous white star against its night of dusky

foliage. Will he guess that my hand trembled as I closed the book upon the poor little blossom, crushing it, as I crush my own heart?

Claire kissed me, repeating again and again:

"Good-bye for a very little while. Come back to us soon."

Clairette proved herself to be at least no hypocrite. She laughed, and danced, and sang, as she called her farewell after me, with all the rapture of a bird singing when the storm that threatened its nest has passed away. The divination of the little witch quite frightens me.

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Mrs. Nevil to Madame Rénal.

Beechgrove, August 8th.

I found my mother-in-law in a less dangerous state than I expected; but her illness threatens to be a long one, and it is possible I may have to put off my return to you. How unwillingly I write these words it would be hard to say; but one can scarcely set foot on English soil without becoming penetrated at once by the national "sense of duty." It seems to soak through you like the little cold fine rain that has fallen incessantly for the last few days. We have fires in the evening. Fancy a fire in August! Oh, my friends, how enchantingly the coast of France smiles at me from afar! It rises before me like a Paradise of Watteau, where shepherds wander with their shepherdesses through a rosy haze, unconscious of those cares and obligations that thrust themselves between more mundane lovers. Alas! I have left that flowery world for a land of coal-pits, where white dresses disappear under waterproofs. What an awakening! It is like one of those beautiful dreams that end in a nightmare. And I went through my nightmare on the horrible steamer, that bore me along in the night towards all I had so happily forgotten with you. The moist air heavy with smoke effectually brought me back to the prose of life. I felt so near and yet so far from Paris. I had such a longing to retrace my steps. And it was too late! When I saw the land looming through the grey morning mist, when I was

near enough to recognize the depressing verdure of a rain-washed English landscape, my tears fell fast. It rained in London where I spent Sunday, and at Beechgrove it was still raining as on the April day when I left it. Beechgrove indeed looks as if it had been plunged in an enchanted sleep since my departure. The lawn stands ready for the eternal tennis, the sheep make the same number of white patches on the trim pasture slopes, Maud is reading the same volume of Tennyson, Isa is working away with the same finely-pointed brush at the indescribable messes she calls water-colour drawings; my mother-in-law, even on her sick bed, fires off the same Scripture aphorisms. She welcomed me as she might have welcomed the Prodigal Son, murmuring as she embraced me: "I hope you have had enough of France." What would she have said had she known that I came back with what she would call the savour of sin in my heart and on my lips! Now that I am safely back in the fold, the atmosphere around already begins to affect me. An inordinate respect for my own virtue steals over me, my conscience dozes in smiling admiration of its own ermine whiteness. I begin to think you led me astray into all sorts of delicious perversity, which I cannot yet steel myself to regret, but which I must expiate. An indefinite sojourn at Beechgrove might surely atone for the greatest of crimes! Do not let your husband talk any more of coming over to deliver me as he threatens to do. My numerous family will guard me inexorably against myself and others. No knight could bring about the escape of the distressed damsel, and M. Rénal would surely perish in the attempt, borne down by *ennui* after twenty-four hours among us! Dear friends, do not add to my misery by your reproaches. It is hard enough to learn the lesson that we are not sent into this world to please ourselves. I have no doubt that my mother-in-law will help me to digest it by every variety of ingenious commentary; but the sudden change of *régime* is almost too much for me. Sometimes I fancy I am dreaming and that I shall awake in the Avenue Marceau. I rub my eyes. No. I still look out on that same expanse of damp velvety grass, broken here and there by white railings, dotted with clumps of trees, and bounded by distant wooded slopes. I am in the land of fox-hunting, and sheep and cattle rearing,

of Stilton cheeses, and knitted stockings. I am in Leicestershire, pronounced "Lestersher!" Pity your forlorn

ODETTE.

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Mrs. Nevil to Madame Rénal.

Beechgrove, December 30th

You accuse me of putting you off perpetually with flimsy excuses and false pretexts. You cannot trust me any longer, you say; you are tired of waiting for my long talked-of return; and you in particular, my sagacious Claire, you begin to suspect some mystery; you are wondering and conjecturing, and longing to solve the riddle. Well, I think it will perhaps be best to tell you the simple truth, though I had made up my mind to keep the secret, which is not entirely my own.

When I first wrote to you after my arrival, enumerating all the Beechgrove externals that I found as I had left them, I made one important omission. This was the presence of Lord Melton. There he was, lunching, dining, or playing tennis, just as on the day I started. He too has not changed one iota! He has not a single freckle more or less, his blushes still rise to the surface on the smallest provocation, he wears the same dogskin gloves, the same horse-shoe pin in his cravat, he is apparently absorbed in the same hippic speculations, and to sum up, he looks as fresh and athletic as ever. Nothing about him suggests the rejected lover in the slightest degree. (By the way, I don't think I told you at the time. But while I was in Paris, I wrote and formally refused his offer.) He seemed not to bear me the least ill-will, and came forward to meet me with frankly extended hand, and a cordial:

"I am so glad to see you once more, looking just as I always remember you, dear Mrs. Nevil."

At first I did not understand what he meant, but it finally dawned upon me that he had made up his mind I was shortly to be married to a Frenchman. I made no attempt to undeceive him. I was not engaged, as he supposed—but neither did I leave Paris altogether free,

for my heart had learnt the mysteries of passion in those swift weeks. Yes, dearest Claire, I admit that I failed in my confidence towards my friend. Forgive me if I hid my sufferings from you. I am truly thankful now to be able to say that I have only suffering to confess. But at one time it was perilously near to sinning. Too weak to struggle longer, I fled. And flight is sometimes the truest courage. Yes, I fled from danger. Some one I had met at your house fancied he loved me—and I—was quite sure that I loved him.

"But if this was so," you will say, "why should it not all have ended in a happy marriage?"

In France, dear Claire, marriage is not always a natural consequence of love, especially among men who abhor convention and routine. The domestic virtues were not conspicuous in my lover. I saw that he would lead me on from sophism to sophism unto unconditional surrender.

You exclaim indignantly! You declare that I misjudge M. Saluces, or whatever friend of your husband's I have in my mind. Yes, it *was* one of his friends—but I have no right to reveal his name. And I trust to your honour not to surprise my secret. It matters the less which it was, as I think every one of them capable of the same offence, which perhaps, after all, is no very great baseness in their eyes. Of course a widow of my age ought to be able to take care of herself. And I did defend myself to the best of my powers, and made no sign, as you can bear witness. Vertpré did not seem to me a sufficiently safe or distant retreat. He might easily have induced you to let him pursue me there. I rather think you had invited him as it was. I put the sea between us, I made the Nevils my Cerberus. I could not shield myself, of course, from the reproaches, supplications, and threats that followed me. These sometimes moved me more than I care to tell, but in the matter of endurance as in all others *il n'y a que le premier pas qui coûte*. I was very nearly devoured, but, once safe, I have never seriously thought of putting myself again within the lion's jaws.

Meanwhile Lord Melton's visits continued. At first my mother-in-law's illness was a sufficient reason. But Mrs. Nevil recovered, and the young man still came. Had the flirtation with Kate deepened into something

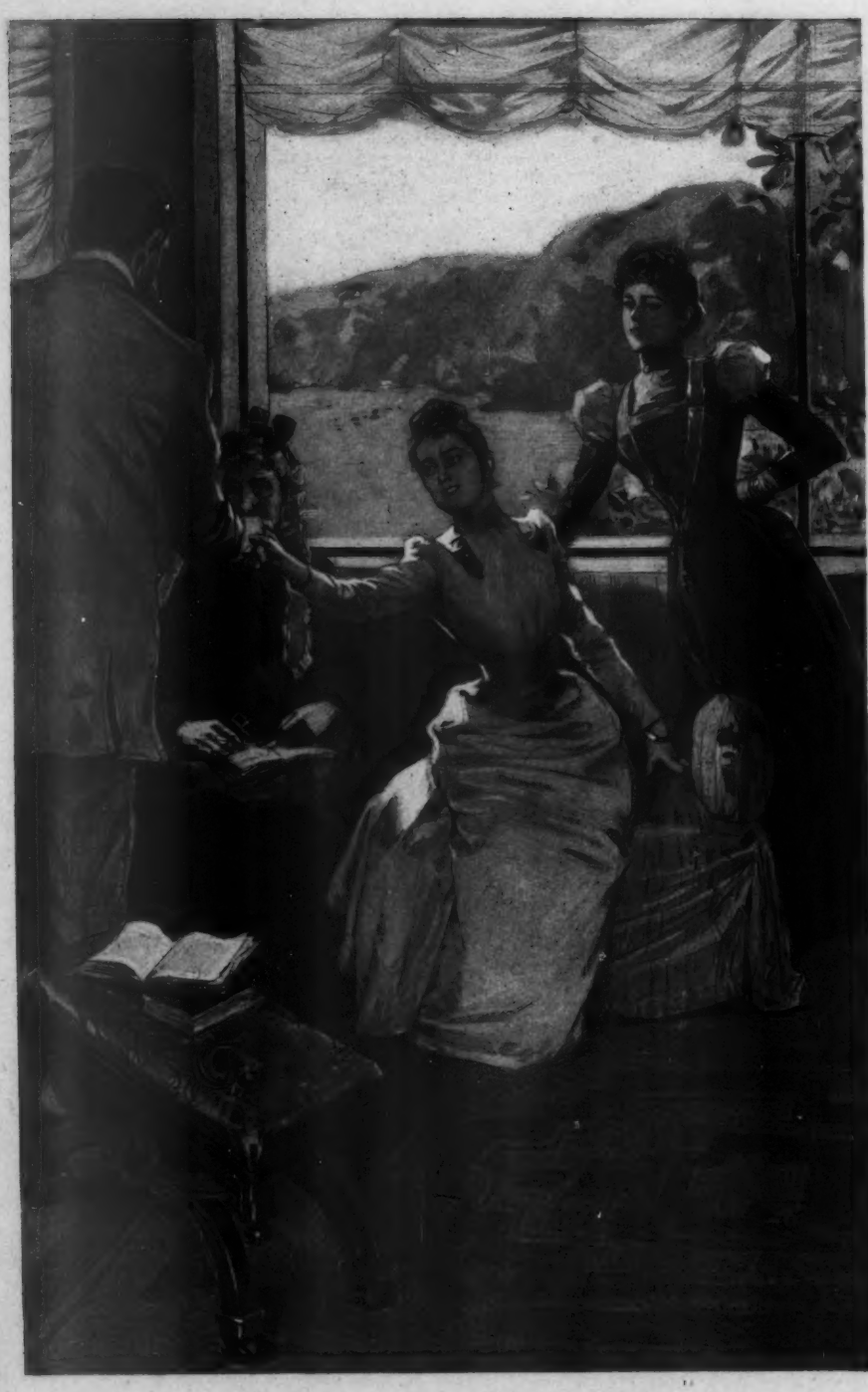
more serious? No, Kate is now provided with a lover, and the rest of humanity no longer exists for her. Is he transferring his affections to either of the other sisters? They shew none of the elation that would result from such a move. I cannot suppose that Lord Melton still thinks of me, after the definite dismissal I gave him. Sometimes I see his honest eyes fixed on me with a sort of anxiety, but directly he finds himself observed, he puts on his usual serene expression, and begins to talk cheerfully of things—well, not very interesting in themselves, but, after the passionate reproaches the morning's post has brought me, Lord Melton's manly chivalry and self-forgetfulness are not a little soothing. He seems absolutely free from any trace of wounded vanity—while the other——

Really, one might suppose I had outraged the most sacred obligations by refusing to become his mistress. For that is what he had determined. In his anger, he drops the mask. For my part, I like to call things by their true names, to speak of folly as folly, caprice as caprice. The divine rights of passion, the sublimity of supreme surrender, all the high-sounding phrases by which men seek to glorify guilt and weakness, deceive only willing dupes. Devotion, honour, self-sacrifice, are not these things rather the essence of love's sublimities? And all these qualities I find in Lord Melton. He has approved himself to me by his long silence, by the delicacy with which he represses every importunate word. He has never asked me a single question. But sometimes, as I have said, he looks at me with a sort of anxiety, as if saying to himself: "Will she presently disappear, melt away into space?" And he seems almost to hold his breath, so to speak, for fear of precipitating events.

"Then you are not going to London this winter?" said my mother-in-law to him the other day.

"I think I shall run up to-morrow," remarked one of her sons. "There's no chance of any hunting for a fortnight. The club's the only place for a fellow in this confounded frost."

"And you, Mrs. Nevil," said Lord Melton, timidly, "when do you think of leaving Beechgrove?"



It was easy enough to read that he meant: As long as you stay, I shall not go.

"I!" I exclaimed. "I have only just come. Why do you think I am going away again? Where should I be going?"

His face flushed scarlet. "I thought—— didn't you tell me that you intended to settle in France?"

"Oh, but one so often makes plans one has to give up afterwards."

It happened that he and I found ourselves alone together during the afternoon. He approached me and began confusedly:

"Did I not understand that you—— I mean—— you have never told me—— I have not heard anything about your marriage."

"What marriage?"

"The marriage I thought had been arranged in Paris."

"But you must have dreamt all this. There was never any question of such a thing."

"But then——" His hand trembled as it clasped mine. "Ah, do not play with me, I implore you. I could not bear another disappointment."

"What do you mean?"

"You remember our compact before you left England?"

"Certainly. I was to write down my impressions day by day, and you were finally to read them."

"No, I am thinking of something much more important than that. You remember your journey was to be a sort of test, after which you were to make up your mind about a certain offer I——"

The poor fellow stopped short in hopeless confusion.

"But you know, I did not wait till my return to decide, Lord Melton. I refused."

"Yes, I know." His face clouded over suddenly. "But if you don't care about any one else, I can't see why——"

"You know there is nothing more than friendship between us."

"Your friendship is more to me than the love of any other woman. Besides, who can tell whether—— The future is in God's hands," he said simply. Then, blushing more furiously than ever: "You will not

forbid me to hope that—— that—— you will some day let me love you!" he concluded, with touching humility.

I affected the greatest surprise.

"Am I to understand that you are renewing your offer?"

"I have renewed it in my heart every day since I first made it, though with so little hope of success. And now, if you will only give me leave——"

"Stop, stop, Lord Melton. There is something I must tell you first. I very nearly stayed in France altogether."

"All I care about is that you have come back, nevertheless."

"But I will not deceive you. While I was away, I was guilty of many imprudences——"

"I know that you could not leave your hand in mine as you are now doing, if you had anything to reproach yourself with."

And truly, if I had had any base thing on my conscience, I could not have met his frank, confiding eyes as I did.

I did not draw away my hand, I added:

"Then you are content not to see the confessions of Odette to Mrs. James Nevil, who, I am afraid, never took her correspondent to task severely enough."

"Did I ever ask you to show me the letters? Why do you worry yourself about such nonsense?"

So, with Lord Melton's permission, I threw my self-examination into the fire. And here again I have to ask your forgiveness, for it was agreed that we should read it together. Perhaps it is well that no one witnessed the struggle between the two adverse forces of Odette's soul. From this day forth I think they are at peace, and the victory remains with the nobler and better of the two.

"Should you like always to spend part of the winter in Paris, as I before proposed?" asks my future husband meekly.

And I reply in the tone of a woman anxious to please her lord and master, that I shall be quite content to live eight months at Melton Hall, and divide the remaining four between the London season and the Highlands, where Ralph shoots every year.

Then I had the satisfaction of feeling that I had made one man in the world radiantly happy, though he said little about his feelings. There is a certain sweetness in playing the part of the beneficent deity, who leaves nothing for a mortal to desire. For myself, I hardly hope more than the happiness of duty accomplished. This, says my mother-in-law, is the truest of joys! I begin to feel that it may be enough for me, and at any rate I shall make Ralph a good wife. If any of your circle, Paul Saluces, for instance, should charge me with worldliness and ambition, I rely on you and your husband, who know me better, to defend me.

P. S. Tell M. Rénal that I read his *Salamandre* in the *Revue,* and that I think it extraordinarily clever.

The cold, calculating coquetry of a woman of the world has never been more exquisitely analysed. He pillories his pretty monster with the delicate cruelty of a naturalist sticking his pin through a silly, quivering butterfly.

TH. BENTZON.





THE CENTENNIAL FINE ART EXHIBITION

IN THE CHAMP DE MARS



We have been bold enough to undertake a somewhat adventurous task—that of attempting to give in the space of a few pages a rapid sketch of French art during a whole century. Anxious to acquit ourselves honourably, our first care was, of course, to ransack all the best libraries within reach. We would take some work of a like nature for model, and carry out our own on the scientific lines therein laid down. After long toil, we gave up the search. And yet, strange to say, no epoch has been richer in art chroniclers than the present. From the moment when Diderot, the declamatory critic, took fire before Greuze's palpitating Naturalism and Chardin's studies in porcelain,

there has been no artist of established fame among us whose name has not furnished the text for a dozen or so of monographs.

What reams of paper have been spoilt in honour of our artists from the time when M. Guizot, in a style that was a triumph of cold correctness, gravely eulogized the poetic character of M. Guérin's inspirations, down to the days when Hippolyte Silvestre, bubbling with fury, dissected the œuvre of M. Ingres, as that of "a Chinese painter of the 19th century, who had lost his way among the ruins of Athens!"

Besides these, we have plenty of studies, both exhaustive and profitable, on individual phases of art, essays on the Classicists, on the Romantic movement, on the School of Fontainebleau, etc., but after patient investigation we are surprised to find no work in which French painting from the beginning of the 19th century has been treated as a whole.

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No doubt the historians of art are waiting among a pile of documents to hear the passing bell of the century before publishing the syntheses which shall form the taste of future generations.

Such a course has its reasonable aspects. The last years of a century have more than once witnessed evolutions both sudden and disconcerting.

But our marvellous Centennial Exhibition of French art, the success of which is already so considerable and so well justified, has stolen a march upon our conscientious chroniclers, and has broken in upon their legitimate perplexities, upon their preoccupations touching Degas' uncomfortable foreshortenings, Claude Monet's alarming experiments in illumination, and Rodin's suggestive reliefs. It makes an appeal, in short, for an immediate verdict, to judges who still hesitate in fear of premature conclusions.

The imposing show cannot fail, we think, to provoke a rich harvest of learned studies on the French art of the 19th century, and this will not be the least happy result of our centennial celebration. Were the principle on which it has been carried out generalized, and applied to all other branches of human industry represented in the Champ de Mars,

what a vast encyclopædia might the specialists, met together at this great World's Fair, have drawn up from the data at hand! A monumental work, it would have preserved for future ages the memory of this Festival of Labour, which sets forth a century's achievement for our admiration.

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The organizers of the Centennial Exhibition of French art must have found the chronological list of artists whose works were to figure at the Champ de Mars a difficult document to compile.

Of course it was plain sailing enough as long as they had to deal with men whose whole artistic activity, or at least the greater part of it, belonged to the 19th century, men such as Boilly, Carle Vernet, David, Prud'hon, Gros, Géricault, and Delacroix—— But what decision could be come to about such names as Greuze, Fragonard, and Moreau le jeune—— who only survived the great revolutionary era by a few years?

It is evident that, without a very serious modification of their programme, the organizing commissioners could not have admitted the masterpieces of these painters, for they all bear dates anterior to 1789. Yet, on the other hand, there was a natural reluctance to exclude the authors of many interesting works that came well within the prescribed period.

It was finally decided that these later representatives of the French art of the 18th century should find a place in the Champ de Mars, but that, with due respect for their memory, only a very limited number of their canvases should be shown. Some such restriction was urgently called for, as the organizing committee was bound by its programme to make choice among works, the greater number of which were executed when the master-hands had lost much of their cunning.

We have thought it well to say a few words on this point, and so to disarm the critical visitor, who, ignorant of the conditions under which the choice has been made, might feel some reasonable disappointment when he fails to encounter such expected masterpieces as "A Father

explaining the Bible to his children," "*La Petite Fille au Chien,*" "The Sacrifice of the Rose," and "The Marionettes."

* * *

It is generally conceded that the history of French art in the 19th century may be broadly divided into two great periods, the Classic and the Romantic. We will not stop to quarrel with this division, which seems to us arbitrary enough; neither will we enter into any discussion of the exact meaning of the term "Romanticism" as applied to the artistic evolution of 1830, serving, as it does, for label alike to the Shakespearian compositions of Delacroix and Chassériaux, to Géricault's "*Croupes,*" and Millet's "*Mort du cochon.*"

The indisputable master of the classic school was, of course, Louis David, whose vigorous genius rebelled against the affectations and insipidities of the "Pompadour" school, and whose powerful influence was the main factor in our national art for nearly forty years. His most famous pupils were Gros, Gérard, Girodet, Granet, Picot, Flandrin, Abel de Pujol, Schnetz, Ingres, etc.

We propose to devote the second instalment of our modest study to this school and its illustrious chief.

Before David closed his eyes on that land of exile to which his political passions had condemned him, the battle had begun. He had heard from his distant vantage-ground the echo of the unequal fray, in which the last survivors of the classic band sought to withstand the furious onslaught of the "Romantics" who, weary of classical dictionaries, impatient of the counsels of Winkelmann, and drunk with the new poetry of Germany, with the verse of Byron and the prose of Scott, flew to arms, with Eugène Delacroix for their general, and all the greatest writers of the day for their heralds and standard-bearers.

At the height of this famous *mêlée,* which had speedily found its counterpart in the literary world, a superb school of landscape, one of the chief glories of our national art, sprang into being among the moss-grown rocks, the calm solitudes, the leafy forest shades of Fontainebleau. Théodore Rousseau, Corot, Millet, Diaz, Daubigny, Cabat, Jules Dupré,

were its luminaries, a group of strongly individual magicians, many of whose canvases, nevertheless, look as if they had been touched upon by the magic brush of Constable; Millet alone, in the inspired *naïveté* of his execution, seems to have entirely escaped the influence of the great English master.

The din of warfare between classicists and romanticists has been hushed for many a year. Peace reigns in our republic of painters. We have no longer among us any of those great leaders whose despotic and revolutionary genius overturned the whole order of official ideas, and who were in themselves an epoch. Certain artists of unquestionable talent but less unquestionable modesty, have succeeded in causing a flutter among the ever gullible public by proclaiming, or getting their friends to proclaim, that no painter before them has faithfully expressed the mystery of reflections, the vibration of air, the delicate azure of shadows, etc—— But the critic listens with a smile, and turns away to dwell on the immortal legacy of those apostles of sincerity, the old Dutch masters.

* * *

Before going into the developments of these two great schools, we intend to devote a few pages to those "little masters," who, if we may be allowed the expression, sit astride of the two centuries, who seem to have escaped all exterior influences, and whose highly individual talents make the examples of their work now in the Champ de Mars most interesting to the amateur. Glancing at them, in the first instance, with an eye to their historical importance, he soon falls under their fascination, and is tempted into prolonged scrutiny by the brilliant dexterity of their execution.

The Commissioners have been well advised in giving an important place in the show to Boilly (1761—1845). Of all the little masters of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, he it is, perhaps, who has written the anecdotic history of his day with the most sparkling facility. We know no more precious transcripts of the manners and customs of the period between 1780 and 1840 than the innumerable little canvases



bearing Boilly's signature. Many of them, notably those painted in the first years of the present century, are furthermore gems of dainty and learned execution. Boilly specially excels in the masterly treatment of draperies; the silken robes of his lovely *Merveilleuses* might have been painted in the atelier of Terburg or of Metzu, those delightful masters, whose brilliant and supple brushes have given an undying sheen to the iridescent folds of satins and moirés.

Like most of the genre painters of his age, Boilly first tried his hand at history. At the age of eleven, he painted a huge canvas of "St. Roch curing those stricken of the Plague." He was little over thirteen when he betook himself to Douai, with a very scanty store of gear, and threw himself on the protection of a relative. This relative, who was then Prior of the Augustine monastery, gave him shelter on the understanding that he was to paint the portraits of all the brotherhood. In 1777 he removed to Arras, where he worked for five years. In 1782 we find him in Paris. He was then barely eighteen, and we may fairly claim a place for him among the precocities. From this date down to the close of the century, he devoted himself to the painting of scenes of familiar genre, in a style of great harmony and finish. His best works belong to this period of his life. They are much in demand, and about fifty of them have been engraved by Tresca, Cazenove, Petit, etc. Among the best-known we may name "The Little Coquettes," "The Swoon," "The Gentle Resistance," "The Little Paper-seller of the Palais-Royal," "The Toilette," "The Surprise," "Before the Toilette," "The Favoured Lover," etc.

From the end of the century down to about 1820, Boilly generally painted compositions of much larger size, containing many figures. They shew him as a master of the art of life-like grouping, but are marred by a certain hardness of touch, and have none of the seductive charm of his early pictures. To the same period belong a prodigious number of small portraits, marvellously successful as likenesses, but nearly all, we are bound to say, dry and disagreeable in technique.

Among the better and more interesting of Boilly's larger compositions we may include "The March of Conscripts in '93," lately acquired by the Musée Carnavalet; "The Arrival of the Diligence," in the Louvre;

"House-moving in Paris," "The Interior of a Painter's Atelier." This last canvas has obtained a marked success at the Exhibition in the Champ de Mars, and is one of the most remarkable works of a very original and prolific master. It contains the portraits of twenty-five artists and men of letters assembled in J. B. Isabey's atelier. Other notable works are "Houdon's atelier," "The Carnival," "*L'Entrée du Jardin turc.*"

Towards the close of his life, Boilly turned his attention to lithography, then in its infancy, and did much for its popularization by the publication of those satirical prints with which dealers' shops were at one time flooded, and to which he owes the least enviable portion of his fame.

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After some considerable study of J. B. Isabey's highly interesting *œuvre* in our national and private collections, we are astonished at the strange persistency with which the general public, and even many amateurs of art, continue to class him exclusively among the miniaturists. It is true that in the delicate art of miniature, he shewed a range as wide as within its limits it was faultless, and that he takes rank beside such masters as Hall, H. Fragonard, and Augustin. But in his long and brilliant career he certainly did not devote himself exclusively to the one branch nor was he always content to display fine imaginative gifts in so confined a field as the lid of a snuff-box. We must grant that he failed as a painter of history, in which line, like Boilly, he made his *début*. But we can afford to forget the mediocre canvases of which he was guilty after leaving the ateliers of Girardet and Claudot, when we place beside them such a truly remarkable work as his "Portrait of General Bonaparte in the garden of Malmaison," or any one among the long series of superb drawings now so highly prized by connoisseurs, in the bold handling of which there is little indeed to suggest the patient minuteness of the learned miniaturist. The best known of the series are perhaps the "Starting to join the Army," "The Review held by the First Consul," "The Congress of Vienna, 1815," a magnificent drawing in black lead pencil, made by Talleyrand's order, and containing portraits of all the actors in



that famous drama, and "*La Barque d'Isabey,* which, in the present exhibition, hangs beneath the delicious pastel of the Marquise d'Osmont, and side by side with the lovely water-colour portrait of the Empress Josephine, a truly exquisite work, which we recommend to our readers' notice. In its marvellous freshness, no less than in its learned and brilliant execution, it suggests the precocious art of Bonington.

In the moments of leisure left him by his duties as official painter, Isabey amused himself by making caricature portraits of his most illustrious contemporaries, by means either of tinted drawings or lithographs. Certain of these skits are still famous, among others the "Boulevard de Gand," in which Madame Récamier, Vestris, Garat, Napoleon, and Isabey himself, defile in fantastic guise before the steps of Tortoni's.

Debucourt was another who made a brilliant reputation by his transcripts of the humours of his day (1755 to 1832). The fame of this nursling of Watteau, Moreau, and Fragonard, has gained rather than lost by the crucial test of time. Many of his aquatints, such as the "Promenade in the Palais-Royal," "Frascati's" and "The Colonnades of the Palais-Royal" now command such prices as to be inaccessible to all but millionaires.

It was as an engraver that he mainly excelled, though he was no mean manipulator of colour. "He sketched his subjects in lightly with pencil or brush," says M. Renouvier, "working them up afterwards by a skilful and luminous use of the point."

Debucourt's engravings are very numerous; not content with the elaboration of his own graceful fancies, he was further famous as the fascinating interpreter of Drolling, Prud'hon, Wilkie, and Carle Vernet.

His work with the brush was much more restricted, and we shall not have to linger long over the list of his best canvases. These are "The Industrious Neighbours," "A Village Fête," "Dance of Peasants," "The Travellers."

* * *

Joseph Vien (1716—1809) belongs, in spite of his dates, to the 19th century, by virtue of his large share in the formation of the great school

of which he was the precursor and David the head. David's early efforts gave little hint of an innovator, and it was under Vien's direction that the author of the *"Sacre"* and the *"Serment du Jeu de Paume"* developed his horror of what, with a scorn not altogether justifiable, he denounced as the affectations and absurdities of the "Pompadour" school, and learnt to look at nature. For Vien was the first master to establish the study of the nude model in his atelier. It is interesting to learn that he received his first instruction from Natoire, and that twelve years later, the aged Boucher himself, waxing enthusiastic over the "Embarkation of St. Martha" presented the revolutionist to the Academy.

Vien's *œuvre* is very considerable. He painted not less than two hundred canvases. His masterpiece is his "Saint Denis preaching to the Gauls," in the church of Saint Roch, in Paris.

Among other compositions, many of which have real merit, the most important are "Mars freeing himself from the embrace of Venus," "Hector inciting Paris to betake himself to the field," "Christ breaking the bread."

We include Lebarbier (1738-1826) in our list, doubtful as we are whether he deserves notice or not. Yet he was a figure of some importance in his time, and gained the brevet of immortality from his brother Academicians in 1788. His *œuvre* is considerable, and deals chiefly with the deeds of Aristomenes, of Phillydas, of Leontiades, of Panteus, and other such famous personages, whose fabulous histories he strove in vain to realize for us in heroic fashion. Lebarbier, in short, was a mediocre painter enough, though an Academician—— the combination is not altogether impossible, even in our own day. Standing midway between Boucher and David, he had all the defects of the old school, without any of the merits of the new.

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The graceful and talented compositions of Demarne (1744-1829) recall the best canvases of both Van de Velde and Karel Dujardin.

Demarne, whose facility was great, perhaps too great, tried his wings in every sort of flight. He made his *début* in historical painting, and



competed against David for the Prix de Rome. One of his most noteworthy works is the painted sketch for "The Battle of Nazareth." This was awarded the prize in a competition in which Gros, the famous painter of the battles of the Empire, took part. But he soon abandoned history, devoting himself to the rendering of landscape with animals, in the manner of Dujardin. He rapidly made his mark in this genre, and the Academy opened its doors to him.

The chief excellences of Demarne's style are his knack of happy arrangement, the precision, sometimes verging on dryness, of his drawing, and the extraordinary reality of his animal studies.

Some of Demarne's canvases, such as his "Route de Saint-Denis," "Farm Interior," "The Threshers' Breakfast," "The Village Charlatan," "The Rustic Sermon," make a very creditable show in our national collections.

Demarne was further an etcher of some ability, and several of his plates, notably "The Flock crossing a Bridge," are much in request.

His influence on the painters of his day was considerable, and without any minute examination of early nineteenth-century landscape, we are able to see how largely such artists as Pau de Saint-Martin, Budelot, Langlacé, and Taunay himself were indebted to Demarne.

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Carle Vernet (1758-1835) was undoubtedly one of the most gifted painters of our own, or any other age. His facility of production bordered on the incredible; in every genre he attempted he was equally successful; Fame delighted to honour him alike as the interpreter of the Bible, the Iliad, the history of Rome, and as the chronicler of the polished and dissolute manners of his day, its Imperial pomp, its huntings, its racings, its wars. He shews us "Abigail bringing presents to David;" he summons us to witness the "Death of Hippolytus;" presently the whole gay procession of his *Incroyables* and *Merveilleuses* will defile before us, their comic attitudes and grotesquely exaggerated costumes exactly symbolizing the fashions and absurdities of the Directory.

Later again he will carry us in the train of the First Consul through the green plains of Lombardy. It is in his battle pieces, several of which

have been reproduced with much precision by Duplessis-Berteaux, that his power is most strongly marked. "Bolder than Van der Meulen, less trammeled by etiquette," writes M. Lagrange, "he took his station in the very heart of the action, and he lays before his spectators not only the general disposition of the lines, but the actual movements of the troops, the frenzied drama in which men and horses, generals and soldiers, play their parts. This living background was so exactly the right one, that in spite of Gros' epic efforts, it has been universally adopted by all subsequent battle painters from Horace Vernet downwards, and the result is a tacit conformity in their methods to those adopted in the "Battle of Marengo," one of Carle Vernet's most spirited military canvases.

His most famous battle pieces, after the "Battle of Marengo," are "The Bombardment of Madrid," "The Battle of Rivoli," "The Morning of Austerlitz," and "The Taking of Pampeluna."

Equine studies had an irresistible fascination for Carle Vernet, and he perhaps threw himself more completely into his realizations of hunting and races than into his military subjects. We must own that we are ourselves inclined to rank the large compositions we have just enumerated far below the charming little genre pictures, so full of dash and sparkle, known under the names of "Calèche starting for a Drive," "Calèche starting for the Hunt," "The Emperor's Hunting-Party," "Louis XVIII's Hunting-Party at Rambouillet," "Deer-hunt in the Woods of Meudon."

But Carle Vernet, besides being a clever painter of history and genre, was, like Isabey, a witty and successful caricaturist. His satiric vigour busied itself chiefly with the bizarre types the invasion had drawn together in Paris. Who does not know his comical prints : "English military types," "Russian Drummers," "Prussian officers," "The gallant Cossack," "The Farewells of a Russian and a Fair Parisian," etc., etc., in all of which "our friends, the enemy," are held up to ridicule with the most inimitable drollery?

Carle Vernet frequently made lithography the medium for these keen satiric quips. In the print-room of our national library there are no less than five hundred lithographs by him, and this by no means presents his *œuvre* as a whole. The most popular of his plates are, perhaps, "The



Road to Poissy," "Dance of Dogs;" "A Game of Bowls;" "The Charcoal-seller's Shave," etc.——

Carle Vernet died at the age of seventy-seven, a few years after his return from Rome, whither he had gone with his son Horace, when the latter was made director of the French Academy.

Death stayed his hand just as he had completed the sketch for a grandiose composition which was to have been the crowning work of his artistic career, "Louis XVIII. going to return thanks at Notre-Dame."

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We ought now to glance at the representatives of that debased school of landscape, of which Bidault, Michallon, Valenciennes, and Wattelet were the high priests. To this school, woods, rocks, skies, and torrents were merely accessories, evolved for the most part from their own inner consciousness in the shelter of their studios, and worthy of attention only so far as they contributed to the effect of some scene from sacred or profane history, some presentment of a ruined heathen temple, or classic Italian monument. But the limits of our study forbid any detailed examination of such work. We must here curtail the form of our already very meagre notices, and content ourselves with a bare enumeration of such artists as Sweebach, Adolphe Rœhn, Duplessis-Berteaux, and Casanova, the "little masters" of battle-painting, whose closely handled anecdotic canvases sometimes delight us by passages not unworthy of Wouwerman.

Side by side with these military painters, we may place certain highly interesting masters of genre proper, such as Taunay, whose combats and pastorals are often set in landscape backgrounds that bear witness to a delicate observation of nature, and whose contemporaries christened him "The Poussin of little pictures;" Madame Haudebourg-Lescot, whose works are mainly village scenes; Xavier Leprince, whose brilliant promise was cut short by his premature death at the age of twenty-seven, and among whose few finished works the best are the "Embarkation of cattle at Honfleur," and the "Landscape at Sunset," which belong respectively to the Louvre and the Bordeaux Museum; Martin Drolling, perhaps the best

painter of interiors of his day, spite of his rather too evident enthusiasm for Gerard Dow and Slingelandt; Hubert Robert, the Virgil of painting, the gentle laureate of blond and rosy Arcadias, many of whose sketches from nature are masterpieces, and who has hardly been surpassed in the delicate suggestiveness with which he clothed his ruined walls, his broken pillars, his fallen metopes overgrown with grass, his shattered entablatures, and all such mournful symbols of decay. Under his touch they took on a sort of life, a familiar and consoling eloquence. Nearly all his poetic architectural compositions are enlivened by graceful groups of youths and maidens; we seem to hear the echo of their kisses and gay babble through the majestic silence of the ruins.

Other well-known painters of the period were J.-B. Mallet (1759-1825). Malbranche (1790-1838), Pierre Vigneron (1789-1840), Duval-Lecamus (1790-1854), Pierre Révoil (1776-1842), Hippolyte Lecomte (1781-1830).

We must not forget François Granet (1775-1849) who divided the honours of his day as a painter of interiors with Martin Drolling, though their choice of subjects was widely different. Drolling's cheery temperament beams through the soft golden lights of his kitchen interiors, in which the busy scullions bustle to and fro, and the bright copper saucepans shine again. Granet's dreamy genius loved to reproduce antique ruins once peopled by illustrious figures, such as the Villa Medicis, the Colosseum, the Theatre of Marcellus, or the cool shades of cloisters, echoing to the meditative pacing of monks in prayer.

Down to about 1840, Granet's interiors were very popular. They are now less in demand, but several of this little master's canvases still hold honourable place in our public collections. The remarkable drawings which constitute the most important part of his *œuvre* belong almost exclusively to the Museum of Aix, his native town, and many interesting specimens are to be seen at the Centennial Exhibition.

We may name the following as among Granet's most deservedly popular works: "Interior of the Capuchin Monastery at Rome," "The Cloister of Saint Trophimus at Arles," "Taking the veil in the Convent of Sainte Claire at Rome."

Flower-painting had also many distinguished representatives towards

the close of the century. Among those of the first rank we must name Pierre Redouté (1759-1804); Bachelier (1724-1805), who was chosen by Madame de Pompadour to direct the decorative department at the Sèvres manufactory, and to whom we owe the abandonment of the Chinese method of painting in favour of the graceful bouquets that now blossom on the milky surface of the porcelain; the brothers Van Spaendonck, Sauvage, and others.

* * *

Among these "little masters" there is one who calls for more detailed notice, namely Lazare Bruandet, landscape-painter (1754-1813), one of the most original artists of his time, though we will not go so far as to say with some critics that Paul Huet, Théodore Rousseau, Cabat, and Diaz would never have been famous, had not Bruandet first shaken off the yoke alike of Boucher's conventionalism and of the magniloquent traditions of heroic genre, and seated himself, palette in hand, among the cool shades of Fontainebleau, "spending whole months over the portrait of some tree or bush."

Modern historians of French art have amply vindicated Bruandet's claim to a high place among our landscape painters, and rescued his memory from undeserved contempt. Yet the Louvre catalogue contains only the following brief and slighting notice of him : "This artist, of whose life and works we have no details, painted many views of Paris, and attempted to imitate the style of Ruysdael." After this fashion is official history written! But happily, M. Charles Asselineau and M. Charles Blanc have given us thoughtful studies, in which they set a very different value on Bruandet's work and influence. We cannot more fitly sum up his biography than by the following quotation : "As he had neither money nor interest, he thought not of Italian travels, but contented himself with those scenes which the Almighty had placed within his reach. Fontainebleau, Vincennes, the Bois de Boulogne, and the Pré Saint-Gervais were the ateliers in which he studied." "In all his pictures, in all his drawings," says Charles Blanc, "we breathe the perfume of the woods, we see the quiver of the foliage, we hear the murmur of the air. Not only is he himself interested in every

clump of thorny bushes, in every willow stump, in every fragment of fallen rock; he makes us share his interest.

"He loved to paint autumn landscapes, when skies are calm and slightly overcast, and the first russet leaves begin to fall. And in his pictures he gives us not merely a faithful transcript of the scene he saw, but his own simple and profound feeling for rustic things and sylvan poetry."

We need add nothing to this dictum of the eminent critic.

Bruandet's very considerable *œuvre* consists solely of landscape. He asked the help of his friends Taunay, Sweebach, and Debucourt when he wished to enliven his woods and fields with figures. His canvases are to be found for the most part in our national collections, where they are generally hung so high as to be invisible. The best are in the Louvre, and in the museums of Nantes and Grenoble.

* * *

Many art writers have, erroneously, as we think, classed Pierre Prud'hon (1758-1823) among the disciples of David. It was under the guidance of Vien, Lagrenée, and Peyron, say they, that the painter of the "Rape of the Sabines" acquired his taste for classic subjects. He imposed his own predilection upon all his pupils like the autocrat he was, and upon none more than Desvoges, in whose atelier Prud'hon learnt the rudiments of his art.

If to have been a faithful lover of antiquity and to have drawn the greater part of his inspiration from the classic ideal of the beautiful, were sufficient to constitute a follower of David, Prud'hon might be awarded a place, and a high place too, beside the master. But this objective identity of artistic aim in no wise justifies such a deduction as that the painter of "The Carrying away of Psyche," owes all his excellence to the benignant influence of the "Oath of the Horatii," and "Leonidas at Thermopylæ."

Both painters had a passion for the antique ideal; but they differed no less in their conception than in their interpretation.

We shall see later on by what principles David was governed when, with a hand at once impetuous and precise, he fixed the almost Olympian action of his heroic personages on the canvas.

Prud'hon, on the other hand, saw in classic legend nothing but a motive,



round which he might weave his own graceful and ethereal fancies, his poetic and softly sensual pagan dreams.

Over the whole of Prud'hon's most individual *œuvre,* with rare exceptions, plays that infinite smile of grace and mystery, that we see in the Madonnas of Leonardo and Bernardino Luini. It is with these artists, rather than with David, that our painter claims brotherhood; it is the echo of their voices through the centuries to which he has given ear, rather than to the paternal counsel of the excellent Desvoges.

Great as was Prud'hon's delight in allegorical formula and mythic legend, he could bring mind and brush to bear on living realities with fine effect. Certain portraits, in which he has successfully corrected the usual looseness of his modelling and mistiness of his contours may be pronounced masterpieces in their way. Among such we may instance those of the Empress Josephine seated on the lawn at Malmaison, of the King of Rome, of Mademoiselle Constance Mayer, of Madame Jarre, and that of the Swedish naturalist, Brunn Neergaard, which hangs in the Louvre.

No artist has so excelled in the treatment of official allegory as Prud'hon. What but the exquisite grace of his genius could have ensured success in the rendering of such subjects as "Liberty vanquishing the Hydra of Tyranny;" "Application guiding the Flight of Genius;" "Innocence led astray by Love and followed by Repentance;" "Statecraft seated by a Sphinx and gazing into a Mirror?"

But, as has been justly remarked, under the magic of his delicate and mellow brush, all the hackneyed attributes of vulgar compositions, cock, cat, sleeping lion, scales, measure, pikes, fasces, and plough, are blent into harmony, and lose their wearisome triviality. In this connection we may point out such exquisite creations as his draped female figures, representing the Republic, Equality, and Fraternity, surrounded by naked children and little winged genii.

Critics have agreed to rank the following among his best works: "Diana in supplication before Juno" (the ceiling of the gallery of antiquities in the Louvre), "Divine Justice and Vengeance pursuing Crime," "Venus and Adonis," "Psyche carried away," "Zephyrus hovering over a Stream," "Daphnis and Chloe."

Properly speaking there has been no Prud'honesque school. The master disliked the drudgery of teaching, and his dreamy temperament must have led him to seek solitude. The lovely apparitions that peopled his visions and smiled upon him from the cloudland of flowery antiquity were, no doubt, shy of shewing themselves unless the magician evoked them for his sole delight amidst the soft hazes of some Anacreontic dream.

He has been imitated, however, by a certain number of imprudent admirers, such as Mallet, Vallin, and Mademoiselle Gérard. But the dangerous experiment has for the most part resulted in melancholy *pasticci*.

Madame Vigée Lebrun painted some of her best portraits under the caressing influence of Prud'hon's genius. Mademoiselle Constance Mayer, too, has shewn us in certain domestic and allegorical compositions, such as "The Forsaken Mother," "The Unfortunate Family," "The Happy Mother," that her graceful brush was guided by the hand of a master who longed to secure the fame of a pupil he passionately loved.

ARMAND DAYOT.





XAVIÈRE

I

THE RED UMBRELLA

The storm was terrible.

No such tempest, said our Prudence, had ever shaken the valley of the Espase.

The rock of Bataillo, that great granite mass which had so long defied the elements, cracked and trembled at the thunder. At each fresh peal, we cried aloud, and the old Presbytère of Camplong, shaken to its very foundations, creaked and groaned.

What if a bolt should fall on our poor old roof in its dilapidated state, and strike us as we knelt on the brick floor of the kitchen, strike us, Prudence, Landry, and me!

To add to our distress, dear uncle Fulcran was abroad in this awful

weather, and at a distance from home. Ah! if only he had been kneeling beside us, murmuring with us :

Sainte Marthe, Sainte Hélène,
Sainte Marie-Madeleine,
Préservez-nous du tonnerre
Qui ravage cette terre.

Unfortunately, my good uncle has the obstinacy characteristic of great saintliness. Never can we persuade him to forego the least of his duties. In spite of the oppressive heat of the morning, heralding the coming storm, he started off to attend the October Conference, the last of the year, and now he was no doubt trudging through the pools of water in his thin shoes, battered by the driving rain, blinded by the lightning flashes.

"Heaven grant that some charitable soul may think of lending M. le Curé an umbrella at Mas-Blanc or La Tour, where he must be just now!" sighs Prudence.

"My poor uncle!" I murmur, my eyes full of tears. "May God protect him on his way!"

Our housekeeper, still agile, in spite of her seventy-five years, springs promptly to her feet, and unhooks a great key that hangs behind the door.

"You are right, little one," she says. "This is a business that concerns those above. I am going over to ring the bell."

"And you are going to leave me all alone in the thunder, that may perhaps kill me!" I exclaim, in terror.

"You have got the schoolmaster's Landry."

"But Landry is just like nobody at all, though he is nearly seventeen."

Landry is the son of M. Landrinier, the village schoolmaster. He is always called by this pretty diminutive of his patronymic. He drew himself up at my disparaging speech. How he managed to suddenly grow taller in my eyes, I know not. The fact remains that in spite of the weakness which bowed his head and shoulders, giving him almost the appearance of a hunchback, his stature now struck me as very imposing.

"Prudence," he said firmly, without any trace of his habitual lisp,

"give me the key of the belfry. If Monsieur's nephew is frightened, stay with him. I will go and ring the bell."

Prudence was touched. "Go, my Landry," she said, kissing him.

The first strokes of the bell that reached us through the hurricane (for the wind was now howling with terrific violence) increased my excitement.

So great was my agitation, that I had to stop short after mumbling three or four incoherent words of the "I salute thee, Mary, full of grace," which I had resolved to keep on repeating with Prudence until such time as the Blessed Virgin should see fit to intercede for us, and especially for my poor uncle, exposed to so many dangers.

Prudence continued, rosary in hand. I listened eagerly to the despairing cries the bell was sending over the country, sending high above the rock of Bataillo, the lofty crests of the Jougla, the huge boulders of Fonjouve, towards the inky heavens. How well M. Landrinier's boy understood his work! Even if I had had the courage to venture into the belfry at six o'clock in the evening, in a darkness thicker and denser than cobbler Cornaz's pitch, with thunder and lightning working their furious will on the world, I should never have drawn such sounds from the metal tongue as did Adolphe Landrinier.

There was such a wail, such a sound of mournful desolation in the accents of our great bell—it weighs fifteen hundredweight—that my thoughts were carried back to the Good Friday services, at which M. Landrinier, the leading singer in our choir, after coughing two or three times in preparation, begins to intone the Lamentations of Jeremiah, in a voice that still preserves a certain pathos, though somewhat thin and harsh.

"*De Lamentatione Jeremiæ prophetæ,*" I chanted, almost unconsciously. I had risen to my feet and stood staring at Prudence, who let the rosary drop from her fingers in her astonishment.

"You sing like an oriole among the chestnuts, little one," she said, "your uncle would be pleased to hear you."

She was very pale. My Latin had frightened her, I believe. I interrupted her by pointing to the window, which had certainly brightened,

shewing a narrow strip of moon in a corner of the sky, whence the clouds had rolled away.

"It is over! It is over!" I cried joyfully.

"God has heard our bell, He has heard us," she rejoined, making the sign of the cross in token of gratitude.

The storm was beating a retreat. We still heard a muttered roar at intervals from the direction of the rock of Bataillo, but the sounds grew more and more muffled, dying away into silence. It was like the unloading of a cart-load of gravel on the mountain slope far off, in the rocky district of Fonjouve.

Landry came in.

"It scarcely rains now, and the sky is as clear in some parts as the waters of the Espase," he said, hanging up the key in its place.

"Hush!" cried Prudence, turning her head to listen, and leaning forward on the tips of her toes like an old black hen rising on her spurs.

"M. le Curé!" she exclaimed, after a second or two, "M. le Curé!"

We rushed to the door, and threw it wide open. My uncle was indeed there, my dear uncle Fulcran, protected, or, to be more exact, roofed in, by a huge red umbrella with a polished cane handle crooked at the end like a pastoral staff.

"The Bergons of La Tour lent it to me," he explained, with a smile that seemed to me, in my joy, of heavenly sweetness.

Landry, always thoughtful, threw a bundle of faggots on the fire. A cheerful flame sprang up from the almost extinguished embers. I took my uncle's three-cornered hat from his hand, his best hat, that cost him fourteen francs at Biou's, the hatter at Bédarieux, and I saw with great satisfaction that it was intact. There was not a drop of rain on it, and the shining beaver had not suffered from the wind. What a first-rate umbrella it was, that umbrella of the Bergons of La Tour! I fetched my uncle's leather cap, and placed it respectfully on his head. It is somewhat out of shape and shiny with long service, but it answers the purpose, and covers the sacred tonsure that should only be exposed at the altar. Then I carefully adjusted two locks of grey hair that had fallen across his eyes.

Prudence, as you may suppose, was not idle all this time.

"You must change your stockings and your flannel vest," she calls out, filling the house with her piercing voice and the clatter of her stick on the uncarpeted floor.

"Oh, no, no, no!" protests my uncle.

"Oh, yes, yes, yes!" she retorts from her own room, where she is rummaging in the linen cupboard.

"Oh, yes! M. le Curé, you must change everything," interposes Landry.

"Oh, yes, you must change everything," I echo.

My uncle argued the point no further. He sat by the fire, his cassock drawn back over his knees, his soles turned out to the blaze. The flames leaped and crackled, leaving little white powdery masses here and there as the dry vine branches burnt out. The steam rose in a cloud from my uncle's sodden shoes, blurring the outline of his small, neatly-formed feet.

Prudence had instilled into my young mind very rigid ideas with regard to what she called "thrift," but which may perhaps have merited the baser name of parsimony. The state of my uncle's shoes disturbed me very much. They would certainly shrink and harden if he held them so close to the fire. Cornaz was disposed to be very exorbitant in his prices. What would he not charge for repairing the damage? What a pity my uncle was not wearing the wooden shoes he bought from the *sabotier* for thirty sous, and which he put on for his ordinary parochial rounds!

But alas! These were his best shoes, thin and fragile as a lady's, and with silver buckles on them, real silver, just the same metal as the crown pieces.

These reflections, thanks to Prudence's lessons, caused me an agony no longer to be endured. Reaching over, I drew forth a pair of list slippers that had been warming under the stove, and presented them to my uncle.

"Won't you put on these, while Prudence finds you the vest and shirt?" I asked.

"No, my child. My stockings are so wet, that I should only soak my slippers through too. These silk stockings I bought of M. Taïs at

Bédarieux have no substance at all in them. Yet he assured me they were the thickest quality——"

He looked at me and at Landry alternately, with a pensive gaze, as if his thoughts were far enough away from us both.

"Ah, that Carmelite Pannetier," he murmured, "that Pannetier!"

(Carmelite Pannetier. What *did* he mean? I had never heard the name from any one before.)

"Who is Pannetier, the Carmelite?" I asked softly.

I received no answer. My uncle was leaning forward between the heavy andirons, so deep in thought that he had not even heard my question. At last he raised his face, all flushed by the heat, and got up from his chair.

"Where is your father supping to-night, Landry?" he asked suddenly.

"We are to sup with Benoîte Ouradou," answered Landry.

My uncle made a grimace. "Poor fare for you there," he said; "look, Landry, you shall sup with us, in return for a little service I want you to do me to-morrow."

"Oh, Monsieur le Curé!" said the lad, bowing like a little child mindful of its manners.

"This is what I want you to do. Before the school opens, go to La Tour, return the Bergons their umbrella, which served me such a good turn, and thank them for their kindness. Now run and tell your father and Benoîte that I am going to keep you."

As Landry opened the door, Prudence screamed from her room :

"Come, Monsieur le Curé. I have put everything ready on your bed."

My uncle went slowly towards the door, fixing on me the same indescribable gaze as before. Then he cast his eyes towards Heaven, and these words fell slowly from his lips :

"That Auguste Pannetier. Is it possible that he can have made such a bond? Is it possible?"

Pannetier again! What did it all mean?



THE MILK-SOUP

While my uncle was dressing in his room, Prudence bustled about in the kitchen, putting the last touches to the supper, and I went to lay the cloth in the dining-room, a great lofty place that served us alike for meals and receptions. I got out all the things, the cloth, the napkins, the salt-cellars, feeling for them in the semi-darkness, for my uncle had not had time to light his Carcel lamp. But I was so familiar with our walnut-wood sideboard, its shelves, and drawers, that I could have found a needle anywhere on it with my eyes shut, and such was the precision of my movements, that I believe I could have threaded it.

I felt an "ineffable satisfaction"—this was a favourite phrase of my uncle's—when Landry re-appeared, and I placed a plate for him next to my own. I was very fond of Landry. His father, a terrible man, with huge round spectacles, beat him and ill-used him in every possible way. I loved him all the better for his sorrows, and was enchanted to think that he should have a little feast for once in a way.

"Shall I help you, Monsieur?" he asked.

"No, thank you, Landry. You do not know the room so well as I do, you might break something. And we should get into a terrible scrape with Prudence if we broke anything."

"Shall I run and ask Prudence for a bit of candle, that you may be able to see better?"

"Oh, no! You must let Prudence alone. She is very busy, and she

will be angry if we bother her. Besides, I don't think there were many candle-ends over from the first communion this year. My uncle will be down in a minute, he will light his Carcel lamp."

"Why don't you light the lamp yourself?"

"What *are* you thinking of, Landry? Do you suppose the Carcel lamp that M. le Curé bought at Montpellier, when he went for the ecclesiastical retreat, and which cost him ten whole five-franc pieces, can be lighted just as you light your candle? It must be wound up before you put the match to it."

"Wound up?"

"Yes, exactly like the clock. Come here, I will shew you where the key goes in."

The young moon we had seen piercing the clouds with one of its horns suddenly sailed out, shewing its slim crescent, arched like Prudence's sickle, against a field of deep star-besprinkled blue. Our uncurtained window-panes shone like crystal. A long ray touched the Carcel lamp upon the sideboard, kindling reflections in the copper, which sparkled like the gold of altar-vessels.

"How splendid that Carcel lamp is!" exclaimed the schoolmaster's son, dazzled by so much splendour.

Just as I took hold of his finger to make him feel the steel screw that my uncle used to wind up every evening with infinite ceremony, Prudence came in.

"M. le Curé!" she cried, "I have made you your favourite soup. Make haste if you want it to be good. You must not keep milk-soup waiting."

My uncle bustled in incontinently. He opened the drawer of the sideboard, and took out of a cardboard box a long key, without wards, and with a large ring at one end. He applied the key to the screw of his lamp, and turned it round many times. Then he paused.

"You are not going to light your lamp then, M. le Curé?" asked Landry, very much astonished.

"Yes, as soon as the oil has risen," with a fond look at the whole paraphernalia, which he seemed delighted to see again.



"The wick is quite soaked through now, uncle," I cried, as much absorbed in the process as himself, and perhaps as full of enjoyment.

While he removed the glass chimney, I struck a match, and handed it to him.

The room was suddenly bathed in light, from the polished floor to the beams of the ceiling, no longer the pale glory of the moon, but a vivid, penetrating brightness. My uncle's face beamed with pleasure. After his struggle against the elements out of doors, it was delicious to come back into the cheerful sanctuary of his modest household gods, to look round on his familiar furniture, his books, that were almost like living friends to him.

"After all," he murmured, his satisfaction overflowing, "there are ineffable moments in life. More than once while I was battling with the storm, I trembled for Prudence, for my nephew, for my poor old rickety house—and behold! I find my family in safety, and the thunderbolt has passed over the shelter God has given me, and left it unharmed. God's holy Name be praised, *Sit nomen Domini benedictum!*"

"Now and for evermore, *et in sæcula sæculorum,*" concluded Landry, with what seemed to me truly remarkable appositeness.

I had a weakness for milk-soup. And I must say that Prudence's milk-soup was something out of the common; "a feast for a king," as she was fond of saying herself. Not that any very rare condiments went to its preparation. Certainly, it was made from the milk of our goat, a much cleaner, better fed, and better kept beast than any of her kind in the village. The process was by no means complicated. Prudence cut some thin slices from the loaf, which she threw into the frying pan, and browned for a few minutes, pouring over them the while a thin stream of oil. Then she turned the whole into the tureen of boiling milk. Now all this sounds simple enough. But there was a special knack about it, nevertheless, a knack that amounted to genius, and a genius our housekeeper undoubtedly was in her own line.

"Well, Landry, is it good?" asked my uncle, filling my friend's plate a second time.

"Monsieur le Curé, I never tasted anything so good in my life," replied Landry, licking his lips, like a cat after a raid on the dairy.

"Well, indeed," said Prudence, "Landry is not likely to taste many dishes like this, wandering, as he has to do, from farm to farm, to beg a bite and sup. To hang about doors is the lot of a dog, says the proverb; and though I am only a servant, I would not, for anything you could offer me, consent to seek my bread hap-hazard, sometimes at a house in the village, sometimes at a farm at Les Passettes, sometimes in a hut on the Jougla, sometimes in a farm at Fonjouve. Do you suppose, Monsieur le Curé, that food snatched by morsels in such a way as that can properly nourish the schoolmaster or his son? You have only to look at them; M. Landrinier is as dry and withered as a stick, and Landry, poor child, is all legs, like a spider. How could his body fill out on such a diet?"

My uncle's gentle soul winced under his housekeeper's extreme freedom, accustomed as he was to her outspoken habits. He looked up quickly, evidently annoyed, and resolved to put a stop to her chatter by a severe rebuke. But presently he drooped his head sheepishly, distressed and hesitating. Prudence's homely face was full of such evident sympathy and sorrow, it was impossible to scold her. In expressing herself thus unreservedly touching Landry, she had no idea of wounding him; on the contrary, she pitied him from her heart for the straits to which he was reduced. M. Landrinier, who made a return for what he got by some extra attention to the children of the house, was generally welcomed at the tables of the parishioners of Camplong; but doors were often shut upon his son, and the poor fellow had many a time wandered about the roads with an empty stomach.

Prudence had long declaimed against the cruelty of this atrocious father, and her mind full, not of Landry, but of the schoolmaster's misdeeds, she had lost control over her tongue. My uncle's swift look made her repent her hastiness, however. She came nearer the table, and bending over Landry, who, sooth to say, seemed not in the least annoyed at her speech, addressed herself to him :

"Landry," she said, still breathless and indignant, "how many times

have I given you shelter here, when your father, who is harder than the rock of Bataillo, has been ill-treating you?"

"Oh, many, many times, Prudence," he answered.

"And when your father has gone off without taking you, or telling you where he was going, how often have I given you a bit of something to stay your hunger?"

"Still more often, Prudence."

"And when no one else would take you in, how often have I opened the door to you?"

"Always, always, good Prudence."

"I don't say I have always given you soup like this, for this is a costly soup, it takes so much olive oil, and therefore I only make it on rare occasions, chiefly on Conference days. But you know you are always sure of a basin of peas or lentils, or a scrap of omelette, and I have often gone without myself to give to you."

"Dear Prudence!" he murmured, his little gray eyes glistening with sudden tears.

"Do not think, my poor Landry," she added tenderly, "that I remind you of these little gifts, which were indeed not mine, but M. le Curé's, to humiliate you. I remind you only to shew you that I love you as if you were my own child, because I loved your mother, who was one of the best women in the parish, and on her death-bed I promised her that I would befriend you."

"Oh, Prudence——"

"Monsieur le Curé!" she cried excitedly, "it is time that these abominations were put a stop to. God has chosen you to stamp out evil in this parish, and you must not hesitate to tear it up, root and branch. I know M. Landrinier. He can control his evil temper with the school-children. He does not dare to beat and cuff them. But he makes up for the restraint by his treatment of Landry, poor innocent lamb, and it is no thanks to him that the child has a whole bone in his body."

"Prudence," replied my uncle timidly, "I have done what I could. I have remonstrated with M. Landrinier, I have even threatened to report his conduct to M. le Préfet. But unhappily he is a man of such violent,

obstinate, and irritable temper, that I can gain no sort of influence over him."

"Well, as he refuses to listen to you, he shall listen to me, I can tell him, the very next time he comes to the Presbytère. I have got my stick, and if he refuses to listen to reason, I will undertake to——"

"Prudence!" interrupted my uncle, in alarm.

"Prudence! Prudence!" stammered Landry, imploringly.

"You are right, Prudence, quite right," I declared stoutly.

It may be that these words, which I could not restrain, encouraged our housekeeper. However this may be, she took no heed of a disapproving gesture from my uncle, but approached M. Landrinier's boy, whose fragile form was bent nearly double over the table. Laying her toil-worn fingers very gently on his head, she lifted his hair cautiously, as if fearing to hurt him, and disclosed a great black bruise larger than a double sou, close to the left temple.

"Heavens! What is that?" cried my uncle, dropping his spoon on the cloth.

"That! That is the mark of one of M. Anastase Landrinier's caresses to his son Adolphe!" exclaimed Prudence, beside herself with indignation. She waved her great stick over our heads—— At this tragic moment, a strong smell of burning reached us from the kitchen.

"Mercy upon me! I have forgotten my *carbonnade* of veal," screamed Prudence, running out of the room.

My uncle looked pityingly at Landry. Then, possessed once more by his fixed idea, an idea incomprehensible to me, he murmured to himself:

"I have heard strange tales to-day. To think of the things that have happened to this poor child in my parish and to Pannetier of Rongas!"

Pannetier again!



THE POPE'S PUG

Landry had the most beautiful hair I had ever seen. It was the colour of the beards on ripe corn, and fine and glossy as the silk on our altar-coverings. When he passed his hands through the masses that fell about his neck, and drew them forward to hide the frightful mark left by his loving father, a golden cloud seemed to float round his face. My affection counted for something, no doubt, in my admiration, but I thought he looked beautiful under the soft glow of the Carcel lamp, which cast an extraordinary radiance round the table. His freckled face seemed suddenly transfigured. Not only did the freckles disappear in the strong light, but all the features seemed to relax, softened by a smile of touching sweetness that brightened his whole face and redeemed the smallness of the gray eyes, the bluntness of the nose, the width of the mouth. His inward delight at finding himself at our well-served table, where kind words seasoned every morsel, beamed out all over him; his whole person glowed with the pleasure of the moment.

Meanwhile Prudence, inveighing against herself and against Anastase Landrinier, the first cause of her misfortune, placed on the table her piece of veal, with many lamentable exclamations over its dried-up shrivelled aspect.

"Veal as tender as a chicken, and I had such work to get it at all!" she wailed. "To think of its being spoilt, after my taking the trouble to get Galibert, the Bassacs' shepherd, to fetch it for me when he went to sell some sheep over at Saint Gervais."

"I assure you, Prudence, it is most excellent," protested my uncle, who had helped himself, and eaten his first mouthful.

"Don't tell me, Monsieur le Curé. Yo are satisfied with anything. You have no more palate than the old goat, and I don't believe you know a potato from a partridge."

"Prudence, we must remember that gluttony is one of the deadly sins. Holy Scripture tells us how Nebuchadnezzar——"

"Well, all that does not prevent you from eating like a starved wolf of the Espinouze, without knowing much what you are taking, especially on Conference days."

"Conference days!" echoed my uncle, in amazement.

"Yes, you are as timid as a wren in all matters concerning yourself, though you can be bold enough on God's errands. And it is my belief that when you find yourself at the Dean's table, you daren't so much as put your food in your mouth, though you have paid for it yourself. That dinner costs you forty sous. And I can't think why you should want to make a present of the money to M. le Curé of Bédarieux who gets more baptisms than you, more weddings, more funerals——"

"My good Prudence, your kind care follows me wherever I go, and divines all my little weaknesses. I am bound to confess that what you say about my meals at Bédarieux is quite true. I don't know how it is. But I cannot deny that I cut a sorry figure enough at the Dean's table. I never feel hungry there. I have often wondered why, and I cannot at all account for my singular want of appetite. I can only suppose that I excite myself too much in the discussions I have with my brethren of neighbouring parishes, on the points of theology, exegesis, morality, or Church history, set down by Monseigneur on the episcopal programme. These discussions, battles, I might almost call them, overheat my blood, and take away my relish for food."

"But why should you dispute with each other? It is not seemly for God's priests to——"

"Why, do you say, my good, simple Prudence? In order that we may discover the truth, and be competent to teach the flock God has given into our hands."

"But I hope you do not really fight, in these battles?"

"Oh, yes, we do, Prudence."

"You fight?"

"Our weapon is argument. Now, to-day, the Conference went off without any sort of heat. Nevertheless, the point of ecclesiastical history I had been treating, and my version of which I had supported by proof neither the Dean nor any of the neighbouring clergy were able to refute, was such a mournful one, that when I sat down to table, I was still so much agitated, I could touch nothing after a spoonful or two of soup. I felt inclined to weep."

Prudence and I, very much overawed, looked at each other in silence.

"Why did you?" asked Landry, inquisitively.

My uncle reflected for a few moments; then he burst out :

"I will tell you. The episode of Church history chosen for discussion this morning was the captivity of Pius VII. at Fontainebleau. It fell to me to describe the long martyrdom of the Sovereign Pontiff, torn from his capital by Bonaparte, and shut up in the middle of a wood. It was all very well to call his prison a palace; that did not make it any less of a prison. Of course I had prepared for my task by copious notes from my own too scanty library; I had also gleaned much material from M. l'Abbé Migne's historical collections, such a mine of precious information! More than once, in the course of my researches, as I found fresh evidences of Bonaparte's threats and violence to the Holy Father, I, peaceable as I naturally am, and well-disposed towards lawful authority, could not but detest the haughty conqueror, scourge of the Church and of humanity at large.

"At the Conference, when *M. le Doyen* invited me to read my manuscript, my emotion got the better of my indignation, and several times I nearly broke down altogether. I thought no more of Bonaparte, degrading himself by petty persecution; my mind and my heart went out to Pius VII., dwelling solely on his sufferings. As I faltered out my oration, my soul was filled with pity for the venerable old man, Christ's Viceroy, invested with the most sacred and solemn powers on earth, yet trampled underfoot by a brutal soldier——"

"But, Monsieur le Curé, are you sure that all this really happened?" interrupted Prudence.

"Yes, I am quite sure it really happened."

"Then was Bonaparte a savage brute?" I exclaimed, indignantly.

"Yes, my child, Bonaparte, or Napoleon, to give him all his names, was undoubtedly a savage brute."

"Oh! Monsieur le Curé, if you would tell us the end!" implored Landry.

"The end gives an instance of cruelty unparalleled in the world's history, and I confess that when I reached the last lines of my work I could no longer restrain my tears."

"Let us hear it, Monsieur le Curé, do let us hear it," insisted Landry.

My uncle considered for a few minutes, pressing his forefinger to his forehead, which shone like a mirror in the light of the Carcel lamp. He then continued, lowering his voice :

"The facts I am about to relate are not generally known among contemporary writers, but I have not accepted them without corroboration. Such may be found in full in a private letter from Cardinal Pacca, the companion of the Pope in his captivity, to Cardinal Consalvi. I know my treatise by heart, so I will repeat this portion to you. Although the subject is rather a deep one for you, there is nothing in it you may not understand and profit by."

"Make haste, make haste, uncle," I implored, in my turn.

"The Holy Father had brought with him into France a little pug-dog, of which he was very fond. This inoffensive beast had been one of his amusements in Rome, when he walked in the beautiful gardens of the Vatican. At Fontainebleau, in his solitude and desolation, he wiled away the dreary hours by playing with his little favourite, teaching her to beg, to lay her paws together like a Christian at prayer, to jump over a stick, etc. These simple amusements sufficed to lighten the captivity of Christ's Vicar. The pug, on her side, shewed the tenderest affection for her master, manifesting her attachment by little gentle sounds and loving caresses, and Pius, in recognition of the dog's fidelity to him whom the whole of tyrant-ridden Europe had abandoned, gave it the playful

name of 'Misericors,' which Latin word signifies 'pitiful, merciful.'"

"What a pretty story!" murmured Adolphe Landrinier.

"'Misericors, or 'Miseri,' as she was called for short, followed the Holy Father everywhere. She trotted after him through the vast corridors of the palace and along the alleys of the park, where he took his daily walk in company with Cardinal Pacca and the few prelates of his suite. When the Pope went to say mass, Miseri would have followed him to the altar, had not a secretary of the household been posted at the chapel door to catch the little animal, and carry her off in his arms. During the performance of the sacred office, which the Pope's age and infirmities, no less than his angelic piety, protracted indefinitely, the secretary, whose name is recorded as Imberti, amused Miseri, uneasy at her master's absence. She would run whining to the door, and when at last it opened to admit her master her joy was unbounded. She would fly round, leaping and barking; then, after the Holy Father had passed his hand over her bristling hair, and seated himself, she would lie at his feet, playing with the edge of his white cassock, which she sometimes gnawed through, or playfully biting at the tips of his white slippers.

"'Miseri, Miseri!' was the Holy Father's mild rebuke, when the sharp teeth of his pet pierced to the sacred toe."

"Oh! oh!" cried Prudence, greatly scandalized. "Do you mean to say our Holy Father allowed his dog to tear his clothes to bits, and bite him into the bargain?"

"Our Holy Father loved Misericors, cherishing her as a relic of Rome and the Vatican, of all that he had lost in his long captivity, first at Savona, and afterwards at Fontainebleau. Nothing would have induced him to check the little creature's gambols. It was enough that he himself should bear the burden of crushing misfortune; Miseri, at least, the creature sent by God for his solace and distraction *in profundis,* should not be cowed by threats or blows."

"The Holy Father was right not to beat his poor dog," murmured Landry.

"Yes, not to beat him as you are beaten, poor Landry," I added.

"Nevertheless," my uncle went on mournfully, "poor dear Miseri's

life at Fontainebleau was not always to be spent among roses. Alas! It is with beasts as with men! Supreme happiness is generally short-lived! The noble creature incurred the petty hatred of Bonaparte by her vigilant and loving guardianship of her master. And this was the end of——"

"Wait a minute, Monsieur le Curé," interrupted Prudence, "I have made you an apple tart, and I don't want it to be spoilt like the veal."

My uncle, accustomed to obey his housekeeper's mandates, stopped short in his story. Resting his elbows on the table, he bowed his head on his clasped hands, and waited. All at once, yielding to a habit common to all who live very much alone, he began talking to himself, and these words fell musingly from his lips :

"Yes, I don't feel quite easy about it. Perhaps before telling the story at the Ecclesiastical Conference, I ought to have got the correspondence between Cardinal Pacca and Cardinal Consalvi, and verified the facts myself—— Pshaw!" he added, after a pause. "I really need not worry myself. I have calumniated neither the Holy Father nor Bonaparte. It was Auguste Pannetier who told me the anecdote at this very table, ten years ago, when he came to hold a mission in the parish at my request. And Auguste Pannetier, a man who has since attained so high a position, could not have misled me on such a point."

Pannetier once more!



BONAPARTE AND MISERICORS

The tart looked very appetizing in the light of the Carcel lamp. The golden hue of the apple mixture contrasted well with the crisp edges of the pastry trellis-work that half concealed it. Here and there, the apple, powdered with white sugar, freed itself from the meshes, and rose up in little sparkling pyramids. It reminded me of the golden and silver embroideries on our best chasuble, which we only used for the great festivals, the silk of which had a pattern of a chalice surmounted by two doves, drinking with outspread wings. Really, it was a most magnificent looking tart. I cannot tell exactly what effect it produced on Landry, but for my own part, the sight of its charms so captivated my mind and palate, that I forgot all about Misericors, the Pope's interesting pug.

My uncle was not less impressed than we were at the success of Prudence's handiwork. After staring at it in admiring astonishment for a few seconds, he seized a knife, and dealt a terrible stroke. The tart split and opened in all directions. Landry received a splendid slice, and I a very good one, though not of such vast proportions as his. I was not in the least put out at this preference, and while he sat considering his portion, scarcely daring to touch it, I began valiantly on mine.

Great was my disappointment! I know not with what sort of apples our too sparing Prudence had concocted the dainty, but they were so acid as to bring tears into one's eyes. I looked at my uncle. He was eating slowly, as if from a sense of duty, picking up tiny pieces of crust

like a bird. He could not make up his mind to ask for a little sugar, fearing to vex his housekeeper; but an occasional grimace he could not repress shewed me that he was of one mind with me as to the tart. I turned to Landry. Landry was despatching his formidable portion, without much enthusiasm perhaps, but resolutely and conscientiously enough. Poor fellow, he had swallowed many a worse morsel, no doubt, at his hap-hazard meals in all the worst houses in the neighbourhood.

I made another effort. The pastry edges, thin, light, and crisp as the sacred wafers, were pleasant enough to the taste. But the fruit was too much for me altogether. I took my courage in both hands, and turning upon Prudence, who stood beside us with an air of very exasperating self-satisfaction :

"Don't you see," I said, "that M. le Curé cannot eat your apples? They are as sour as the sorrel in the garden. Give him a little sugar."

"Sugar!" she exclaimed, horrified. "Good Heavens! I sprinkled the crust over five times."

"I daresay, but each time you used about as much as a pinch of snuff. I know your sprinklings, they are no good at all," I persisted, burning my boats recklessly.

Our old servant's eyes flashed fire at me. My uncle thought it time to intervene.

"My good Prudence," he stammered, in a voice full of gentle and resigned deprecation, "I may indulge myself a little after my fatigues and sufferings from rain and storm to-day, and if you will allow me to have the sugar-basin——"

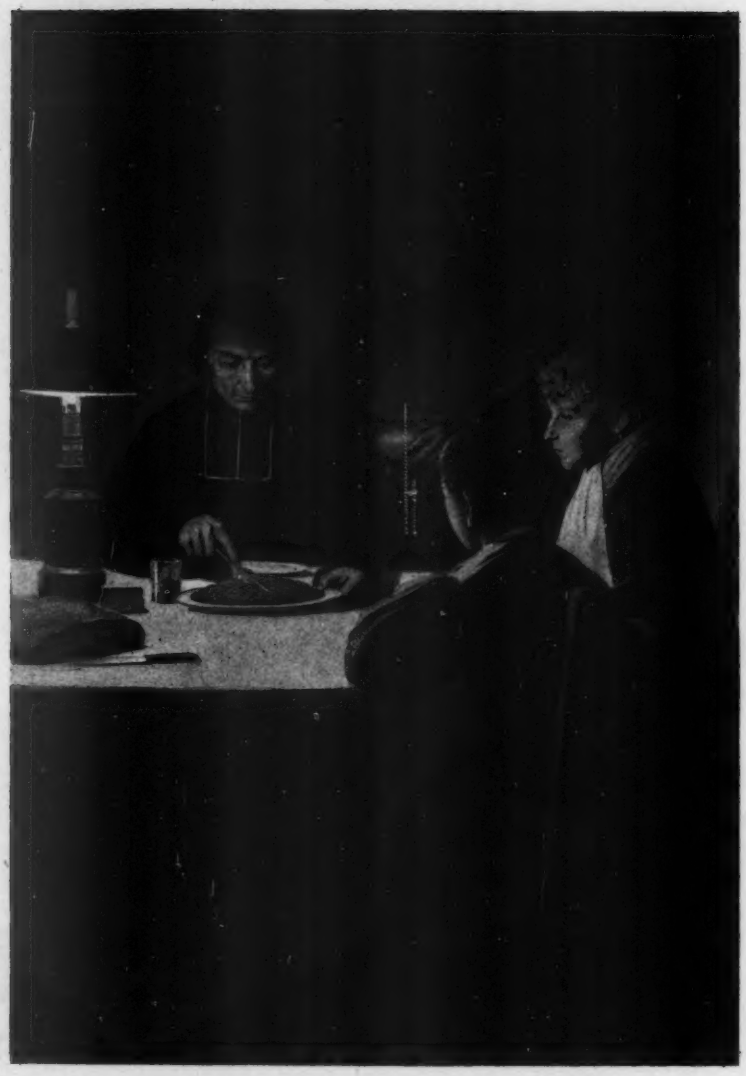
"Do you want one or two pieces?"

"Did you not hear?" I interposed. "M. le Curé wants the sugar-basin."

"Yes, Prudence, let us have the sugar-basin," said my uncle, with a timid playfulness that went to my heart.

She brought it without further persuasion, and we managed to dispose of the unlucky tart, which was, I think, the most unpleasant morsel I was ever called upon to swallow.

It was my custom to fold up my uncle's napkin for him. I concluded



that the meal was now at an end, for, of course, we could not expect anything by way of dessert after our raid upon the sugar, and I got up to perform my task rather out of humour. I thought Prudence might have treated us to a handful of chestnuts, as Landry was supping with us. At the beginning of October, chestnuts are just in, and the first that fall from the shell are deliciously fresh, tender, and mealy, especially the sort we call in our part of the country "*négrette*." Evidently, there were no "*négrettes*" for us, no chestnuts of any sort or kind, in fact.

However, my uncle did not rise as usual to say grace. What was he waiting for? Perhaps he was not waiting for anything, but only thinking of that Auguste Pannetier, whose name had been so often on his lips. The silence was so unbroken that we distinctly heard the oil in the Carcel lamp rising through the wick. It made a soft singing noise, like the distant warblings of a lark, as it soars out of sight over our heads.

"And what of Misericors, Monsieur le Curé?" said Landry's voice suddenly.

"Yes, you are forgetting," said our housekeeper, "you have not finished your story of the Holy Father and his dog."

"Should you like to hear the end, Prudence?"

"Yes, certainly I should."

"Well, stir the fire into a blaze, and you shall know what happened at Fontainebleau from beginning to end. Brrr!" he ejaculated, rubbing his hands and shivering, "though the Bergons' umbrella stood me in good stead, the drops I could not avoid have chilled me to the bone."

Prudence responded with unusual alacrity. She and I both bestirred ourselves, and presently the light of the Carcel lamp paled and was swallowed up in the glow of an armful of blazing ash-twigs. The room shone to the very ceiling.

The great beams, which had seen no such brilliant illumination since the winter, smiled down upon us. Even my uncle's face, a little drawn and haggard, brightened in the cheerful light.

"Well, Monsieur le Curé?" asked Landry, tormented by an unconquerable curiosity.

"The end is terrible indeed," said my uncle. "You will all remember the fight that made such a stir in the parish six months ago, when Galibert, the Bassacs' shepherd, was nearly killed. Galibert, in the pride of his youth and vigour, thinks himself invincible. I would never allow any one to tell me what cause of quarrel he had with Salasc, the butcher. But one evening, Galibert met Salasc bringing back some cattle from Clermont market, and throwing off his vest, turned up his shirt sleeves, and proposed that they should settle their quarrel there and then. The butcher accepted the challenge; but being a peaceable fellow, and not wishing to figure as the aggressor, he refused to strike the first blow. Planted like a post in the middle of the road, he waited till he was absolutely obliged to defend himself. At last Galibert made a rush at him, with such violence that he bent like a reed under the onslaught. The shepherd clasped his adversary round the ribs, and uttered a yell of triumph, his hair bristling, his muscles standing out like cords. The thought of victory seemed to give him tenfold strength; he raised Salasc in his arms and was about to hurl him into the ditch by the roadside, or worse still perhaps, over the parapet of the bridge, when 'Turk,' Salasc's dog, recognizing his master's danger, left the cattle he was guarding, and with one bound fastened upon the nape of Galibert's neck, forcing him to loosen his hold. The butcher was free; but the battle was continued by the man and the dog.

"'Turk, Turk,' shouted Salasc, calling off his dog.

"'Help, help!' screamed the shepherd.

"'Down, down, Turk,' ordered Salasc, beside himself with horror.

"But the dog was past his control. At last, seizing the animal in his arms, he succeeded by main force in dragging him off, and so saved Galibert, who picked up his vest, and slunk off in the gathering darkness. I remind you of all this to shew you that animals have their ideas——"

"And what was Misericors' idea?" asked Landry, intelligently, bringing my uncle slily back to the point.

"Misericors' idea was to hate Bonaparte with all her heart, like an honest pontifical dog as she was. You can all understand that Napoleon must have had some strong motive for keeping the Pope shut up at

Fontainebleau. The odious despot's object was to wring from the Holy Father a long series of concessions in matters pertaining not only to the Church of France, but to the Church Universal. Such things, however, are beyond you, and I will not enter into them now. I need only tell you that the Emperor paid frequent visits to the Pontiff to discuss these matters, and on each such occasion Miseri received him with marked ill-will. Crouching at the feet of her master, watching his every movement, the little animal would raise her head at Bonaparte's entrance, and greet him with a series of short barks. If the intruder approached the Holy Father too closely, she would rush boldly at him, showing her rows of little sharp white teeth. After a time, Napoleon lost patience with the daring creature who ventured to interrupt him when he spoke, to threaten him when he moved, and he requested his Holiness to send away the dog on the occasions of his visits.

"The Pope, however, whose temper and spirits had been sorely tried by long oppression and misfortune, disregarded this impertinent injunction, and Misericors was not driven from the apostolic presence, as the Conqueror demanded. It was most unfortunate," added my uncle, gravely.

"Unfortunate!" exclaimed Landry, excitedly.

"Unfortunate!" I echoed, much perplexed.

"One afternoon the Pope, after a quarter of an hour's stroll in the park, returned to his apartments, and feeling somewhat tired, was about to take his afternoon siesta, as had long been his custom, when Cardinal Pacca came to tell him that the Emperor wished to see him. The Pope would gladly have deferred the interview, and was casting about for a suitable excuse, when Bonaparte, who cared very little about etiquette, burst into the room like a cannon-ball. The Sovereign Pontiff, justly annoyed at this cavalier treatment, which seemed to him a deliberate want of respect, sat immovable, instead of rising from his chair to receive the Emperor, as he invariably did when his visitor was properly introduced by one of the household. The Conqueror of the world stopped short in surprise. But though the Pope sat motionless and dignified, Miseri, scenting the enemy, had rushed to meet him, and flew round him, barking furiously.

"'I begged your Holiness to spare me the annoyance of this dog's presence,' said the Emperor, frowning darkly.

"'Miseri,' murmured the Holy Father, calling back the pug, who drooping her ears, ran and hid under his arm-chair. Bonaparte's face relaxed into a smile, and he began at once upon his business, in a tone that was almost amiable.

"'Holy Father, you must forgive me for having intruded upon you somewhat rudely, but I was anxious to learn from your own lips the attitude you propose to take with regard to the convocation of bishops about to be held in Paris.'

"'Sire,' replied the Pope, resolutely, 'I had the honour of acquainting you with my decision a few days ago. It remains unchanged.'

"'Then I am to understand that you refuse to preside over an ecclesiastical conference called together by my authority?'

"'Unworthy as I am, I alone have received from God power to govern His Church.'

"'And I count for nothing, then?'

"'You are the Emperor, you are Charlemagne, victorious, superb, magnanimous. But your jurisdiction is confined to earthly interests, and has its limitations; while mine extends to all things spiritual, and none, not even you, may fetter it.'

"'Chiaramonti!' exclaimed Bonaparte, furious at the old man's resistance.

"The Pontiff, hearing his family name—the name of a noble family of Romagna—thus hurled at him like an insult, by way of negation to the supreme powers with which he was invested from above, rose to his full height, and faced the enemy.

"Bonaparte, unused to opposition, took the action as a sort of defiance. He strode furiously forward towards the Pope, and losing all control over his passion, raised his arm threateningly, perhaps to strike. The dog, rushing from her hiding-place, threw herself upon him, and fastening upon his coat, tore off two of the buttons. Bonaparte, startled perhaps for the first time in his life, recoiled; but he recovered himself almost instantly, and while the Holy Father, greatly concerned at the accident, was trying to calm the dog, Bonaparte boiling over with sudden fury,

like a true son of fierce and savage Corsica, seized it by the neck, threw open the window, and hurled the poor beast into the air at a height of a hundred feet above the ground.

"'Sire, Sire,' lamented the unhappy Pope.

"'Was I to let myself be bitten?' demanded Napoleon, turning away from the scene of his vengeance. 'Suppose your dog had been mad!' he added, excitedly.

"'It was not mad, it was not mad!'

"'What would have been the fate of the world?' he continued, still absorbed in his own personal risk.

"The Holy Father could no longer stand upright; he dropped fainting into his arm-chair, murmuring :

"'Sire, the world would have tasted peace!'"

"That Bonaparte was a regular Landrinier!" cried Prudence.

"He was much worse than Landrinier!"

"And what happened after that?" asked Landry, who did not like any mention of his father.

"Yes, what happened, uncle?" said I.

"When the Holy Father recovered from his swoon, he found himself surrounded by his little court of exiles, all in the greatest distress.

"'Miseri,' he asked, opening his eyes, 'what of my Miseri?'

"Cardinal Pacca informed him, sparing his feelings as much as possible, that the poor little creature, falling from the second floor of the palace, had broken its ribs against a projecting angle, and had just died. At this sad news, the Pope said nothing. He could only bow his head and weep."

We all sat gaping, open-mouthed, our eyes full of tears.

"Well, Monsieur le Curé," said our housekeeper suddenly, in great agitation, "if you do not interfere, Adolphe Landrinier will meet the same fate at Camplong as the Pope's pug at Fontainebleau. You have seen the state of his head. But I will not see the poor child, thin and weak and helpless as he is, killed by ill-treatment. If to-morrow, instead of writing to M. le Préfet, who will only laugh at your letter, you don't denounce Anastase Landrinier to the Mayor Bassac, or to the policeman

Laviron, I will lodge a complaint against him myself, and in good strong language, that I swear."

"Do not worry yourself, Prudence. To-morrow, I promise you, I will send for Landrinier, and call him to account. Perhaps a strong appeal from me may put a stop to the cruelties that shock me quite as much as they do you. In any case M. Landrinier will learn that I have my eye upon him, that I shall take note of the least violence on his part, and that I am determined to proceed against him with the utmost rigour, and not only to accuse him to the Mayor, but to make a formal complaint against him to the *Procureur du Roi* at Béziers."

At these words Landry suddenly sprang to his feet, and with frantic gestures cried shrilly :

"It was not he who struck me, it was not my father!"

"What! not your father!"

"No, Monsieur le Curé, it was not, it was not indeed!"

"Who was it then?" asked Prudence, still very indignant.

But Adolphe was sobbing loudly, and was quite incapable of speech.



My surprise knew no bounds.

Why was Landry shedding such bitter tears, if his father had not beaten him? Why then should Landry be so unhappy? I was completely puzzled, and fixed enquiring and, to tell the truth, slightly tearful eyes, first on my uncle, and then on Prudence, seeking to get to the bottom of the mystery. But their dejected looks told me nothing. My uncle, his chin sunk on his breast, his hands resting on his knees, stared fixedly at the little flames that leaped against the polished bricks of the stove from the burning ashwood, and Prudence, bowed upon her stick, and apparently unconscious of her movements, sat senile and unnerved, her head shaking as I had never seen it shake before.

How old they both looked, my uncle even more so than his housekeeper! The Carcel lamp threw out in strong relief the polished dome of his forehead, the two deep hollows in his thin cheeks, the bluish tinge in his complexion, almost black where the angles of his face cast shadows in the strong light. As I looked at him, he reminded me of dying members of his flock I had often seen in the last agony at Camplong, Les Passettes, on the Jougla, and at Fonjouve, when we went to take the sacred Host to some death-bed.

Was he dead? Was he about to die?

It was my turn now to burst into tears.

My uncle looked up. "What is the matter?" he asked.

"I was thinking of poor Landry," I said, not daring to confess what terrible dread had wrung my childish heart.

Prudence removed her right hand from the knob of her stick, and laying it upon Landry's golden locks, remarked, not without a touch of severity :

"You see what you are doing."

"I—I?"

"Yes, you are making Monsieur's nephew cry. You ought not to do that."

"Forgive me, I am sorry——" he stammered.

"Instead of watering your waistcoat with that shower, you had better tell us what really happened to you. Did you fall down at the Espase the day I saw you with Xavière Ouradou?"

"No, Prudence, I did not fall."

"Well then, did any one——?"

"Yes, Prudence, some one."

"Some one!" cried my uncle, suddenly waking up; for the last five minutes he had evidently been far away from us, no doubt with his mysterious Pannetier of the Carmelites.

After a pause he repeated in a tone of authority : "Some one, some one? Landry," he continued, after another pause, "God has entrusted the supreme control of this parish to me, and it is my duty to know all that happens here, good or bad. Camplong, Les Passettes, Jougla, Fonjouve, and Bataillo are my kingdom. Upon my government of this realm of fifteen hundred souls depends the everlasting welfare of my flock, their reprobation or salvation at the last day. My own salvation, too, depends on my discharge of this duty, in which I have spent myself for many years, to which I give my life-blood, drop by drop. I command you, therefore, to tell me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If there are evil men among us, you must point them out to me. Remember that, by so doing, you become an instrument of divine grace, for when you have shewn me the guilty one, who knows whether it may not be granted me to rouse repentance in his breast, to lead him back from his sinful ways, to save him—— So it was not your father who struck you?"

"No, Monsieur le Curé, it was not."



"Take care, Landry. You must not allow your affection for a person who does not always shew himself worthy of it, to tempt you to lie. Speak, God hears you!"

"Uncle, you know Landry never tells lies," I interposed, vehemently.

"You are right, my dear child. Landry is the most truthful creature in the parish, and I ought to have remembered it."

Then turning to Landry again, he addressed him very gently and affectionately.

"Tell us all, we will believe you."

Landry said, with an effort :

"I will tell you everything, Monsieur le Curé. And first of all, it is right you should know that though my father has often given me a stinging box on the ears when I have not obeyed him promptly enough, or when I have bungled over something he has bid me do, he never gave me a blow that stunned me as did the blow I received that evening on the edge of the Espase, near M. Bassac's meadow. I had come to keep an eye upon Galibert, who is, as you know, the most dangerous fellow to women and girls in the whole country-side. I had seen Galibert come down the slope of the Minier brook with his cattle, cross the Espase river, and make his way towards the pastures by the water. He looked even more robust and resolute than usual, but I declared to myself as I watched him, that if he spoke one rude word to Xavière Ouradou, who was busy on the bank, picking up and folding her mother's washing, I would rush out, and give him such a knock on the head as should make him keep his tongue between his teeth."

"What! My Landry, would you have ventured to measure yourself against Galibert?" cried Prudence, enthusiastically.

"Yes," said M. Landrinier's fragile son, bounding in his chair. "I know Galibert is the strongest man in the parish and for miles round in the Cévennes, but I was determined to fling myself across his path, if he offered any harm to Xavière Ouradou."

"But Galibert could have bent you to the earth like a reed with one touch of his hand."

"Of course Galibert could have crushed me in a moment, but meanwhile,

I could have screamed, and Xavière, warned of the wolf's approach, might have fled. Besides," he added, raising his thin right arm, "there are pebbles on the banks of the Espase, and I know well how to sling them."

My uncle gazed at Landry with mingled surprise and admiration.

"My son," he said, with grave simplicity, "when we are fighting on the side of justice—and protecting the innocent is a work of justice—the feeblest weapons, if placed in our hands by God, may ensure victory. David, a youth like you, hurled a pebble from his sling, and the giant fell—— Then it was Galibert, the Bassacs' herdsman, who wounded you?"

"No, Monsieur le Curé, Galibert did not touch me."

"Then you had no encounter with him?"

"I crouched down among the thick underwood on the bank, ready to come forward if necessary. Meanwhile, from my hiding-place, I watched Galibert, who advanced towards me, followed by the long line of his flocks. No single movement, either on his part or that of his beasts, escaped me. The sheep wandered here and there, sniffing at the water, or snatching a mouthful of grass. He was looking far ahead, not in Xavière's direction, but towards his sheep-folds on the Jougla. Perhaps he was going that way? My heart beat with pleasure at the thought that Xavière, whose mother had left her alone in that solitary spot, would escape his notice."

"The heart that beat with pleasure at that thought was a good heart, Landry," said my uncle. "Go on with your story in all its details, just as you have been doing. I want a minute account of the whole adventure."

"But Galibert, planted on a stone in the midst of the stream, his mop of red hair hanging over his face, seemed in no hurry to go his way. I crouched lower, hoping still. Presently Galibert whistled softly, calling his beasts to come and drink, but neither sheep nor dogs seemed to hear. Raising his great stick, he made a sign, and went off in the direction of the Jougla."

"I breathe again," said my uncle, which he literally did, drawing in the air with a deep sigh.

"Well, but what about the wound on your forehead?" asked Prudence."

"Yes, what about the blow?" I insisted.

"Seeing Galibert climb the path towards the sheep-cotes and enter the Bassacs' chestnut wood, I came out from my hiding-place to go home, when Xavière caught sight of me, and called to me in her clear voice. You all know Xavière's voice, and how it has a sound in it like the altar-bell."

"Yes, my son, we know it, the voice of an angel; of the archangel Gabriel, if you like," said my uncle. "But make haste, let us hear the end of your story."

"'Could you come and help me for a minute, Landry?' called Xavière.

"'Yes, certainly, for as many minutes as you like. What can I do for you?'

"'Pick up these sheets, and towels, and handkerchiefs, and all the rest of the washing, and pile it in this basket. I feel rain-drops as big and round as peas.'

"'Where is Benoîte?'

"'My mother has gone home with the first load. Make haste, she will be back in a minute.'

"I ran about in all directions, picking up the linen in armfuls. Benoîte Ouradou is much better off than we Landriniers for such things, and she has almost as many sheets, towels, and handkerchiefs as you have here, yet in a very few minutes there was not a single rag left on the pebbles. Xavière, as she watched me working, laughed at my zeal. Nothing pleases me so much as to hear her laugh, for you know, Monsieur le Curé, she has scarcely smiled for a year, since she lost her father. I felt as if I had strength enough in my arms to put the whole Jougla mountain and the Bataillo rock into the bargain in a basket, and carry them for her. And most fortunately, the rain ceased.

"'Are you satisfied?' I asked.

"'I am indeed, my good Landry. But you hurried so much, that the linen is rather untidy. My mother does not seem to be coming just yet, so shall we arrange the basket a little better?'

"Before the last words were out of her mouth, I had bent over the basket, and taking the linen out piece by piece, I shook it first to take out the creases, passed my hand over it like an iron, to smoothe it, and laid it back again in its place.

"Xavière, seeing I was so expeditious at the work, stood by watching me, her face beaming with pleasure, and encouraged me by murmuring every now and then in a friendly voice :

"'Thank you, thank you, my good, kind Landry.'"

"I know you were always great friends at the schools," said my uncle, beaming on his favourite.

"Thank you, thank you, Landry," I murmured softly to myself, almost unconsciously imitating Xavière's voice, the voice of the archangel Gabriel. My friend continued :

"My father is often busy at the mayor's office, or his services are needed at the church for weddings and funerals, so how could the infants' class be carried on without Xavière Ouradou? I look after the boys, she takes the girls, and we neither of us ever touch the ferule."

"That's right, Landry; the children ought not to be roughly treated. But go on with your story."

"My story? Monsieur le Curé, I hardly dare confess to you——"

"What, Landry?"

"Well, as I placed the things in the basket, I raised my head every now and then, and feasted my eyes, so to speak, on Xavière's face. I know it was wrong. I have heard you in the pulpit rebuke boys for looking at girls—— However, I must tell you the truth. I fancied, in spite of her little laugh, that Xavière was sad. Her face looked paler than usual, and a sudden fear took hold of me, making me loath to leave her or to take my eyes from off her. You remember her black hair, parted simply on her forehead, like Saint Philomena's, in the chapel-shrine?"

"And framing her face so exquisitely, so divinely—" added my uncle. "The other evening Xavière Ouradou came to the Presbytère to fetch a picture of Saint Francis Xavier, the patron of her dead father and of herself. I was enjoying the dying radiance of the evening, and had not

yet lighted my Carcel lamp. Xavière entered the room. I turned round, and her pale face, which looks even whiter than it really is against her jet-black hair, seemed to float towards me in the twilight, like the moon rising in the heavens, *sicut luna perfecta in æther,* as it is written in the eighty-eighth psalm."

"Monsieur le Curé, that is beautiful," said Landry, his eyes filling with tears.

"Yes, uncle, that is beautiful," I echoed, clapping my hands approvingly.

"And what did you say to Xavière, seeing her look paler than usual?" asked Prudence.

"I will tell you everything," he stammered, very much agitated, hiding his hot face in the napkin he had been crumpling in his hands.

"Rest for a little while, if you will, my child," said my uncle. "We will wait."

He threw on to the hearth a whole faggot of broom, that was lying on the floor.



BENOITE OURADOU'S WASHING-BEETLE

My uncle took up the tongs and amused himself by heaping the twigs of broom one over the other. Mending the fire was one of his favourite amusements. In winter, when the grate was piled up with coals, flaming and crackling like Maître Valat's forge, he spent hours arranging the lumps, placing them symmetrically, directing the little bituminous jets that darted hither and thither, brilliant, bluish, and phosphorescent, and occasionally burst through the bars in sudden spurts of flame. Oh! that coal from the mines of Camplong, of Les Nières, and Graissessac! The very remembrance of it warms me through now!

But the kindling of the broom-twigs was neither a long nor a complicated task.

"Listen to me, Landry," said my uncle, laying down the tongs, "the schools have been very much on my mind for a long time, and I have a pet project in connection with them, in which you and Xavière play an important part. Ever since I have held this cure, it has given me much uneasiness to see the boys and girls all learning together, taking their places side by side in your father's classes. Your father is a conscientious man who does his work thoroughly, and though he may occasionally err on the side of severity in his dealings with his pupils of both sexes, he cannot be accused of failing to guard their morals as far as possible. But the Evil One, alas! is ever on the watch for his prey, and the scandals that have disgraced other places may break out here at last. One of the most effectual means of saving my dear parish from danger would

be to have two separate schools, one for boys, another for girls. I have questioned M. Landrinier, and he tells me that you and Xavière are first-rate monitors. You must both study diligently, store your own minds, and learn to manage children. Who knows whether God may not so far bless my efforts and hearken to my prayers, that I may see Xavière Ouradou mistress of the girls' school in my parish, and you, Adolphe Landrinier, master of the boys'?"

"No, Monsieur le Curé, it is no use thinking about it," said Landry, mournfully. "If you only knew how Benoîte Ouradou detests her daughter!"

"Benoîte detests her daughter!"

"Monsieur le Curé, I can only tell you this. If you can do nothing to help her, Xavière Ouradou, the little Saint Philomena of this parish, will come to a violent end!"

"You make me tremble, Landry."

"And me too," cried Prudence.

"And me too," I repeated.

"Well, you shall judge for yourselves," said Landry. "The basket being now full and in perfect order, Xavière's next care was to hoist it on her head and to go off. Her mother would be agreeably surprised when she came back presently. The pains I have in my limbs make me very weak, and it was out of the question that I should attempt the burden, I should have dropped it in three minutes. What was to be done? The thought of my own helplessness made me clench my fists with despairing rage. Should I never be a man? I thought of Galibert, of his great strong arms like chestnut branches. And he has no use for them at all, keeping his sheep among the mountains. Meanwhile, Xavière bending down before me to receive her load, till her knees almost touched the ground, kept on saying :

"'Make haste, Landry, make haste.'

"With a supreme effort of my whole body, I hoisted up the basket, and placed it on her head. But, as Xavière rose, and turned to go, the ill-balanced burden slipped from her, and the whole of the linen was scattered on the stones. Worse still, Xavière herself nearly fell with it.

But I caught her just in time, and made her sit down to recover herself. She was whiter than the scattered linen, and great tears gathered in her eyes. At last she sobbed aloud :

"'My mother would have been so pleased if I had helped her by carrying home this basketful of linen. She is very tired, after doing all the washing. She got up at two o'clock, and has been soaping shirts and stockings half the night.'

"'And when did you get up?'

"'At the same time.'

"'And I suppose you were washing shirts and stockings too?'

"'Yes, but I can't work like my mother. I can work hard enough at my books at school; but I cannot take to work in the house or the fields.'

"'Why do you care for none of these things, my Xavière?'

"'Perhaps it is because of the terrible weakness I feel.'

"'Weakness in your back, and legs, and arms?'

"'Everywhere.'

"'Since when have you felt like this?'

"She raised her hand, and weeping bitterly, pointed to the high cypress trees in the churchyard, close to the steeple.

"'You mean since the death of your father?' I asked.

"'My mother loves me, I think, but not in the same tender way as my father used to do. Oh! he was so good to me—— so good.' Her grief broke out afresh, and turning her face towards the graveyard, she cried aloud, in a voice that rang through the air :

"'My father, my father Xavier—come back!'

"At that moment Benoîte Ouradou, followed by my father, came out from the clump of underwood where I had hidden to watch Galibert. What had they been doing there together? Had they been watching us, as I had watched Galibert? I felt terrified. As to Xavière, she kept her eyes fixed on the cypresses and the church steeple, and seemed unconscious of all else. My father went off in the direction of the village, apparently in a great hurry. But Benoîte advanced upon us, her sabots clattering on the pebbles. When she saw all the linen scattered on the



bank, her cheeks became redder than the poppies in the corn, and her eyes nearly started out of her head.

"'Is this the way you take care of the washing?' she cried, seizing Xavière by the shoulders, and shaking her violently.

"'Do not be angry with her, Benoîte,' I implored. 'She wanted to help you, but unfortunately the basket was too much for her strength, and she could not carry it.'

"'Yes, that's just it?' she exclaimed, taking no heed of me in her rage against her daughter. 'You never do a stroke of work from morning till night, you lazy jade, but you want to make people think you very industrious, and the end of it all is that the whole of my clean linen is tumbled out on the ground, while you are romping with boys. Ah! you are beginning that now, are you?'

"But Xavière seemed to be in a kind of trance, hearing nothing. She stood upright among the stones, slim and fragile as a reed, and perfectly motionless, her arms stretched out towards the church, like some saint in a picture.

"'Come, make haste, fill the basket now, as you emptied it,' said her mother.

"Xavière made no answer. She still stood motionless, lost in thought, sad thoughts of death, no doubt. Her mother seized her by the skirts so roughly that the stuff rent in her hand.

"'You are tearing me, mother,' she said, very gently.

"'You can mend it. For the last time—will you leave off gaping at the church; it has done nothing to you.'

"'I am not looking at the church, mother, but at the churchyard. And I cannot look enough.'

"'Insolent hussy!' screamed Benoîte, her red hair bristling on her forehead like that of a wild beast. 'Take that, and tkat, and that!'

"Before I could interfere, the poor martyr, Xavière, who made no attempt to escape, received three terrible blows from Benoîte's clenched fist.

"'Wretch, do you wish to kill your daughter?' I cried, rushing forward, too late.

"'It will teach her to be always casting her dead father in my teeth!' Then, glaring at Xavière like a she-wolf of the Espinouze : 'As if I did not mourn for your father much more than you can do, you jade. Idling about on the banks with a boy.'

"Seeing her daughter motionless and half-dead, she moved away, fearing perhaps she might be tempted to kill her outright. She began to pick up the scattered handkerchiefs, we watching her and listening to her. She was muttering between her teeth, grinding out terrible threats, and making furious gestures.

"Suddenly she began to search among the pebbles, her back bent nearly double. What could she be looking for?

"Presently she rose. She had discovered her chestnut-wood beetle, which she had left among the stones, and possessed entirely by her murderous rage, boiling with anger from head to foot like a vat of new wine, she armed herself with the terrible weapon, hard and rugged with long use, and held it up before Xavière, crying :

"'This is what I will correct you with, limb of Satan, the next time I find you trying to do me harm with people by whining over your father's death.'

"Xavière faced her mother boldly, standing on a block of stone before her. In a louder voice than usual, she replied :

"'Well, you can begin now, for I shall never cease to weep for my father.'

"The weapon fell more promptly than a stone hurled from the hand; but this time I had flung myself between Benoîte and Xavière in time, and it was my forehead that received the blow. That is the whole truth, Monsieur le Curé!"

Scarcely had Landry uttered the last words when a tremendous roar of thunder deafened us. The storm, arrested for the moment, had begun its work again, and was making its way through Camplong, the Jougla, Fonjouve, and Bataillo.

My uncle shuddered. "Run home, my son, as quickly as you can," he said to Landry. "No one will come to even-song to-night. Besides, it is half past nine. Make haste, make haste."

"But, Monsieur le Curé, I hope you will not forget Benoîte Ouradou, the first thing in the morning," grumbled Prudence.

"Yes, Benoîte Ouradou will hear from me in the morning," said my uncle, resolutely.

We left the chimney-corner, and went into the kitchen. In the very middle of the room was spread the Bergons' great scarlet umbrella, each of its dozen ribs making a little pool on the flagged floor. My uncle furled it carefully, and giving it to my friend, enjoined him to use it on his way home, and at dawn to take it back to the lenders.

"All right, Monsieur le Curé. You may depend on me."

He opened the door. A sudden blaze of lightning, illuminating the rock of Bataillo, till we saw it as plainly as in the daylight, nearly blinded us.

"Wait a minute, Landry," said Prudence.

The thunderbolt, after darting furiously through the heavens, burst with a terrific crash, and fell somewhere among the chestnut groves of the Jougla or of Fonjouve.

"God is visiting this district," murmured my uncle, crossing himself devoutly.

"Here, my Landry," said Prudence, giving him a screw of paper about the size of a walnut, "take this. It is cooking salt. When your father is fast asleep and snoring, you must melt it in a glass of water, soak your handkerchief, and keep it on the bruise all night."

"Thank you, Prudence." He sprang out into the darkness, opened the huge umbrella, and set off running.

"Well, Monsieur le Curé, didn't I tell you that that thin, miserable, dried-up old chip, Anastase Landrinier, was making up to Benoîte Ouradou?" cried Prudence, who, spite of the lateness of the hour, was burning for further gossip.

My uncle shewed by a dignified gesture that he was not inclined to listen any longer.

"Prudence," he said, wearily, "it is very late, and I have my prayers to say. The weather was so dreadful, I could not repeat my vespers on the Bédarieux road. I will hear what you have to say another time.

God first, God before you, God before every one." Then turning to me : "Go to bed, my dear child."

Prudence, mumbling inaudible phrases, in which the names of Landrinier, Adolphe, Xavière, and Benoîte Ouradou occurred very often, wandered about near the sideboard aimlessly, pulling out the drawers, and shutting them again; anxious to hear what more there might be, I lingered a little as I made my way towards the glazed door that separated my alcove from the dining-room.

Meanwhile, my uncle stood, breviary in hand, waiting to be alone before beginning the *Aperi os meum* of the evening office.

We left him to himself.

Just as I was falling asleep, in that doubtful moment that is neither sleeping nor waking, these words sounded in my ears :

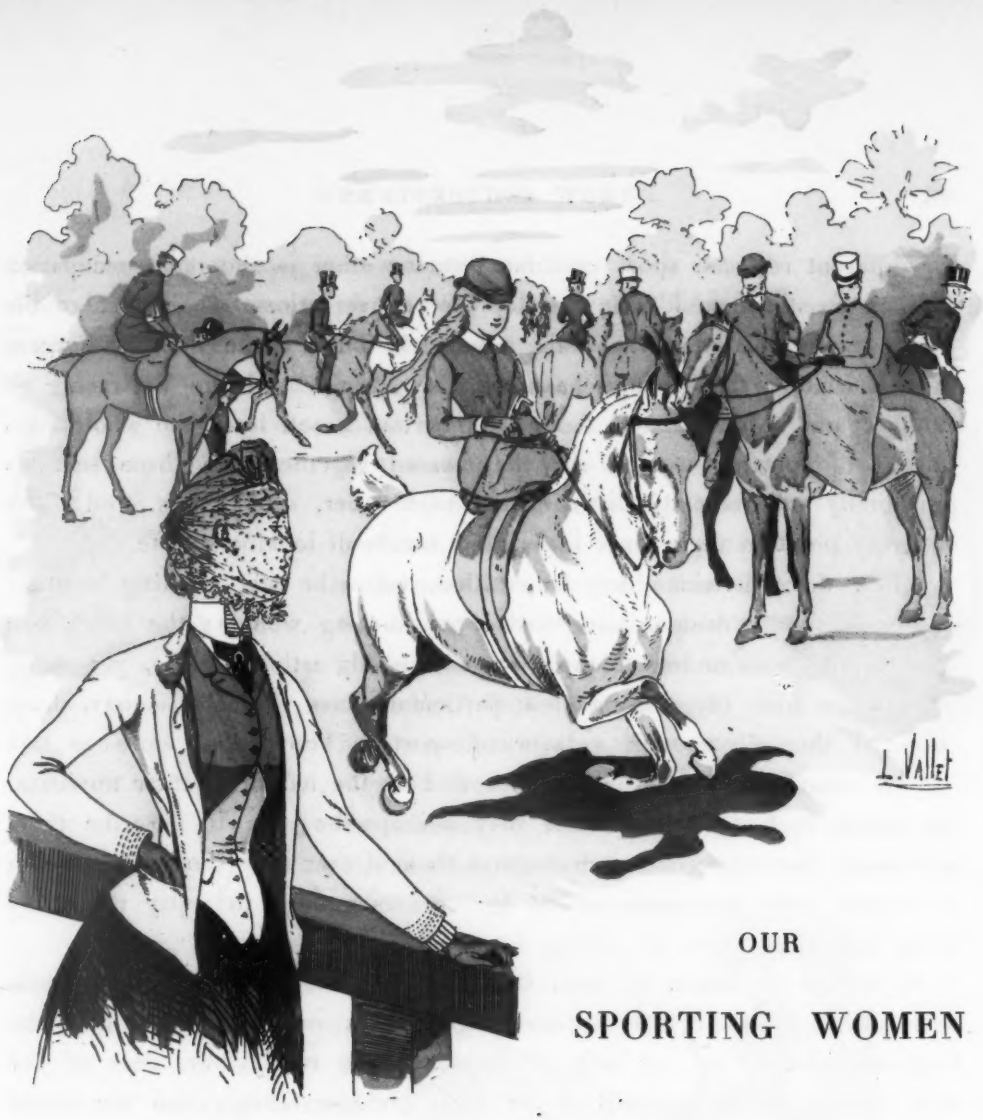
"Ah, that Pannetier, that Pannetier!"

Had my uncle broken off his devotions to send the strange ejaculation heavenwards? Or had I myself murmured in a dream the unknown name I had heard so often repeated? I could not tell.

FERDINAND FABRE.

(To be continued.)





OUR SPORTING WOMEN

The Sportswoman, or the woman who poses as such, may certainly be considered an essentially English product, and one on which it is to a certain extent our habit to glorify ourselves. That there are women in other countries who are fond of sport and of out-door exercise, is undeniable, but they are more or less isolated and eccentric specimens, looked upon by their tamer fellow-countrywomen as being slightly "*toquées*," and in no way can they be accepted as specimens of a distinct type.

Here in England, this favoured isle is blest, not with one distinct type of the genus Sportswoman, but with no less than three. This fact may cause some surprise to the layman, but it is none the less true that there are three distinct sections of women, to each of whom, and

for different reasons, sport in some form or other is the main occupation of their existence and their one topic of conversation. Their idea of the seasons is regulated, not by the almanack, but by the hunting fixtures in the winter, the steeple-chases in the spring, and the flat-racing of summer and autumn. And though on certain broad lines the whole contingent of sporting women may be massed together, the three sections are totally and radically distinct from each other, seldom mix, and differ on every point in their inner ideas, and modes of looking at life.

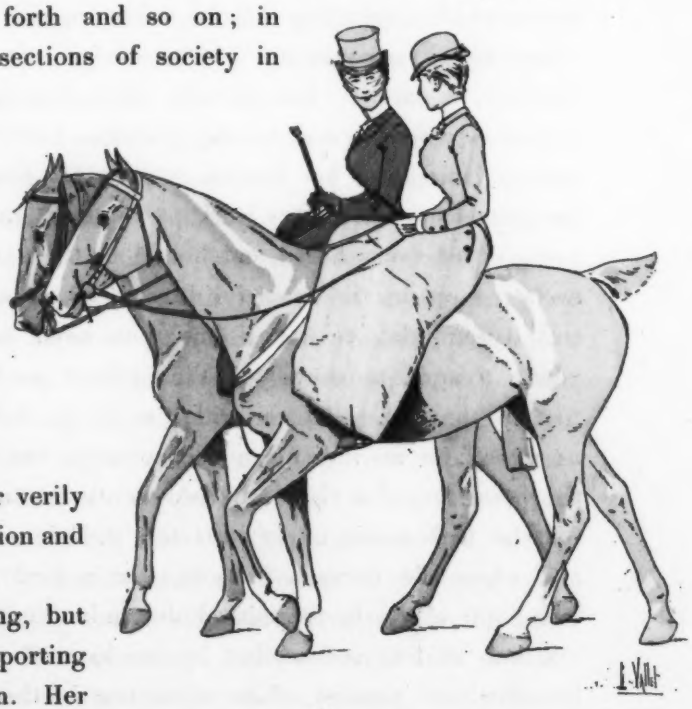
These three divisions may be entitled, 1st : the real sporting woman; 2nd : the racing woman; and 3rd : the hunting woman; the latter two appertaining more or less to the class of "shoddy article," ordinary women, who, for a love of gain or of a particular class of male society, have veneered themselves with a layer of sporting knowledge, more or less limited according to their intelligence and to the length of their novitiate. By taking each type in turn, I may perhaps be able to describe them sufficiently for my readers to recognize them if ever they should be thrown in contact with specimens which are curious enough to repay the study of an enquiring mind.

It should be borne in mind that all these women are more or less pale reflexes of their male surroundings. With very few exceptions, the Englishwoman is not an original creature; she rarely has ideas of her own, except on the worship of the great goddess Grundy and the Social Proprieties—on these two topics she can become eloquent, and fired with a sort of religious want of toleration, which is almost impressive. Apart from this, she rarely evolves anything from her internal consciousness; perhaps she has none, perhaps it is empty; at all events it is non-productive. But she is intensely, though unconsciously, imitative; with her imitation is not only "the sincerest form of flattery," but the kind of flattery she imagines must be most pleasing to the male sex; and thus it happens that her utterances and her habits are pale reflections of those of the men among whom she is thrown, or whom she most desires to please. If they are horsey, she dons tailor-made garments in checks as loud as theirs, wears "spats" over her boots, billy-cock hats, and if she does not actually cut her hair short, makes up for such half-

heartedness by wearing men's shirts, and ties which she folds herself, fastened with a gold safety-pin. If her surroundings are Tory, she becomes a Primrose Dame, and sprinkles "Habitations" about her neighbourhood. If on the contrary the worship of the G.O.M. is ordained by her lord and his friends, she accepts with more or less enthusiasm the strange society into which his political tastes plunge her, reads the "Gutter Gazette," and becomes an orator at the meetings of the Liberal Women's Association. If her surroundings are artistic, she disdains to brush her hair, or wear stays, and so forth and so on; in all sections of society in England, the absolute want of originality on the part of the women is one of the most striking features to the thoughtful observer. The saying "Shew me your friends, and I will tell you what you are," might be transposed into "Shew me the woman, and I will tell you what her friends are!" for verily they will appear in pale reflection and reproduction in her person.







To this somewhat sweeping, but alas! true assertion, the real sporting woman is a decided exception. Her

impressions, received by means of a healthy out-of-doors bringing-up from her actual babyhood, have crystallized round a certain form of existence, in which she has such distinct and real interests of her own, that she cannot realize any other kind of life. This woman is born and bred in the country, in a family with sporting traditions from father to son. Most likely her father is a Master of Hounds, and she and her brothers have ridden to hounds as soon as they could be strapped across a saddle at the age of three. Up to the age of seven or eight, she disdains a side-saddle, and her first sorrow is probably when she is forbidden to ride like a boy any longer, and has to submit to a girl's side-saddle. Not indeed that she wants any saddle at all; she is never happier than when "schooling" across country with her brothers, on a bare-backed pony which she has successfully caught in a field, and bridled herself. Apart from the detested hours of imprisonment in the schoolroom, she grows up in the open air, wild and unconventional as a nymph of Diana, truthful as the day, absolutely devoid of feminine wiles and coquetries, with a schoolboy's rigid ideas of honour and absolute contempt for anything which, according to that code, could be termed "bad form" or "mean," with cheeks somewhat sunburnt and weather beaten, no doubt, but glowing with health, and with eyes clear and limpid as a fawn's and equally guileless. She may not be versed in many foreign languages, her French is probably that of Stratford-atte-Bowe, and her knowledge of history perhaps intermittent; but she could tell you the pedigree of every horse and hound in the stables and kennel; she knows every covert in the countryside and its capabilities in the way of foxes, and if you wish to wet a line, you need ask no better guide than this young nymph, to shew you the likeliest pools in the trout stream at the foot of the hill. She can ride, walk, or fish all day, she is as untiring as a wolf, or an Indian, in the country; but the time comes to "present" the young Dryad at Court, and she is taken to town, more or less unwillingly, for she feels instinctively it is not the place to suit her. No more it is, and when she escapes from it, like a bird from the net of the fowler, it is with a clearly formulated determination to marry no man who would ask her to live surrounded by bricks and mortar. To the end of her life, the one passion of her existence is the love of nature and animals.

She marries, in due course of time, some neighbouring squire. The duties of matrimony, the care of a house, the bringing-up of children, more or less alter her scheme and ideal of existence, but not to any great extent. To the end of her days, she remains the only real type of sporting woman, the woman who loves sport for its own sake, as being the natural end and aim of the life she has been brought up to. As long as she is able, she rides to hounds, surrounded by her husband and her olive-branches, with the same fervour that she brought to the pastime at eighteen; by degrees, as she more and more qualifies for the welter weights, and weight-carrying hunters become more and more unattainable in price, she can no longer ride as straight as she would still love to do, but has to go round by the despised gate. Later still a pony cart with a fast cob has to succeed the saddle; but she still follows on wheels, and sees as much of the run as most people.

When she arrives at this period, her love of breeding almost takes the place of the more active love of sport. She goes in strongly for breeding horses, dogs, and cattle; she has the stud books by heart, and has even been known to superintend in person the matrimonial alliances of her four-legged children (for her animals are verily children to her!). No sale of pure-bred cattle takes place without her, and she insists a great deal more on the necessity of pedigree in her bulls and sires, than in her sons-in-law! This type of woman, young or old, is easy to identify, even when taken from her accustomed haunts, and landed in the Row in full London season. She has a strong partiality for starched linen collars and cuffs at all times and seasons; she looks upon delicate feminine frills and tuckers as "fussy absurdities." Even with her smartest frocks, she clings to two things, as outward and visible signs of salvation : *i.e.* a linen collar and dogskin gloves. It does not matter if the dress is a diaphanous creation of filmy silk and web-like lace, the product of some dressmaker who is the high-priestess of her art; the daintier the toilette, the more absolutely certain is the appearance of the high linen collar and the coarse dogskin gloves. The milliners and dressmakers may do their best or worst; she pays their bills stolidly, and—finds the balm of Gilead in her collar and gloves. With them,

she is certain of her identity, without them—Chaos would come again!

Bright, cheerful, good-natured, truthful to a fault, she remains to the end, in spite of her many little eccentricities of ways and dress, a most excellent member of society, strong in her admirable common sense, and practical country knowledge, innocent as a baby as regards everything else, knowing her own mind, and following its dictates without fear or favour, and utterly incapable of plagiarizing anything or anybody.

* * *

In startling contrast to this excellent type of the "*mens sana in corpore sano*" is the racing woman. She is certainly a "sporting woman" in the sense of being one of the set who, if they do not actually live by "sport," at least look to it to supply them with a considerable amount of the luxuries as well as the excitements of life. To her and her companions,



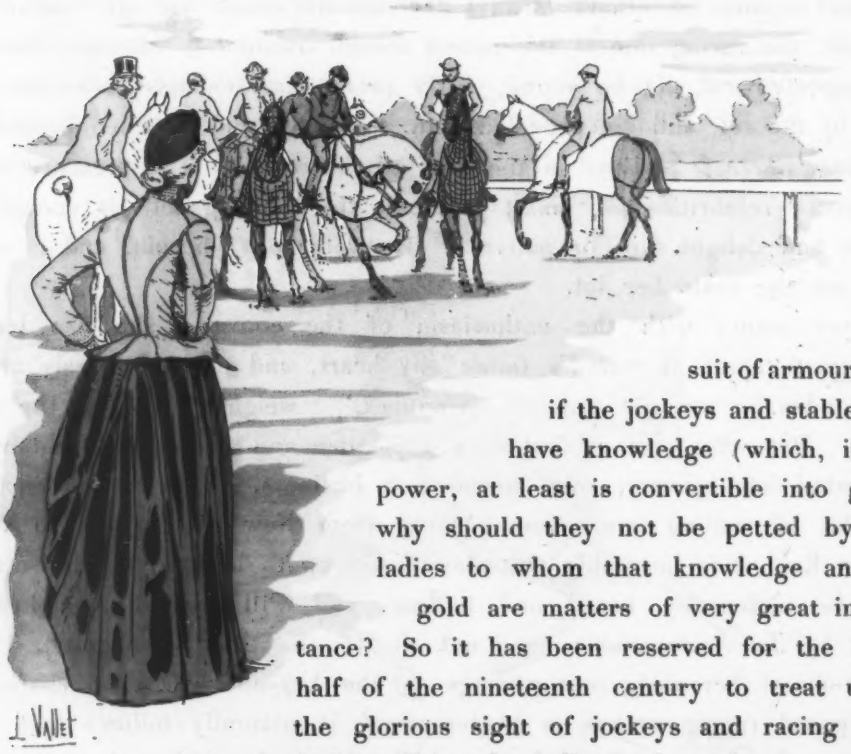
"sport" in no way means field-sports, hunting, fishing, shooting, or the like. Like Gallio, they care for none of these things, and if the truth were told, the racing woman, apart from racing, hardly knows a horse from a cow. Town-bred, in all probability, she nourishes the profound

contempt for the country and its inhabitants which is characteristic of the cockney mind.

There are several reasons which have entered into the fact of her becoming a racing woman. Married, perhaps, to some retired Army captain, her first social success, however small, was probably at some race meeting, to which he had taken her. The superabundance of men on race-courses pleased her; their eminently intellectual style of conversation answered to her idea of wit and brilliant repartee, her pert tongue could hold its own in such surroundings, and it was not long before she established a reputation for saying "smart" things, usually at the expense of others, always the absent ones. Of all "sets" in society, the racing one is the easiest for an outsider to obtain a footing in, especially if she be young, fairly pretty, fast enough to amuse the men of the set, and yet provided with a husband and so-called protector, *"pour timbrer le papier"* in the eyes of the world. The presence of a few social celebrities and smart people in the "racing set" is enough to dazzle and delight the fair native of Bayswater or Tyburnia, and in with that set she casts her lot.

Very soon, with the enthusiasm of the convert, she has learnt the greater part of *"Ruff's Guide"* by heart, and chatters wisely about "the odds," "straight tips," "allowances," "weights," and all the rest of it. But what was at first only a pastime and a means of obtaining an entry into society, soon becomes a business. If a woman makes a habit of visiting every race-meeting from New Year's Day to New Year's Eve, it is inevitable that she must take to betting, otherwise she will be undeniably bored and listless, and will generally be looked upon by her companions as "out of it" (in their vernacular). As imitation of her male surroundings is the key-note of what character the typical racing woman is possessed of, it naturally follows that she bets, at first in small amounts, which she gets some male friend to put on for her with his own money. *"L'appétit vient en mangeant,"* and in a very short time, the novice developes a regular "book," opens operations with a London betting agent, has money on most "events," and is ever feverish in the search and hunt after that mirage of all

racing speculators, a "straight tip about a real good thing!" The hunt after "tips" is apt to lead the huntress into odd company, jockeys and stable-boys being the chief purveyors of the article, but what cares she? Race prejudices, pride of caste, are things unknown to her, and replaced in her composition by personal vanity of her looks and "smartness;" besides has she not ever before her eyes the example of the great and noble dame of high degree, who not only was on terms of intimacy with a great and famous jockey, but, if report said true, solicited his hand in honourable matrimony? In these enlightened days, caste prejudices are as much an anomaly as if a man were to appear in Rotten Row in a full



suit of armour; and if the jockeys and stable-lads have knowledge (which, if not power, at least is convertible into gold), why should they not be petted by fair ladies to whom that knowledge and its gold are matters of very great importance? So it has been reserved for the latter half of the nineteenth century to treat us to the glorious sight of jockeys and racing touts being invited to dinner by ladies and gentlemen; and be it said to the credit of the jockeys, they are usually the quietest of the party. Songs culled from the Music Halls, practical jokes accompanied by peals of noisy laughter, and endless poker or "nap" occupy the evenings of the days the race-meetings last.



Between one race-meeting and another, and in the dreary months of winter, the racing woman has but one distraction (besides that of taking "longshots" in bets as to coming "events" in the spring and summer), and that is poker. She retires to London with the rest of her set, unless they indemnify themselves for their enforced racing inactivity by a run to the Monte-Carlo tables. All the long winter afternoons, the lamps are lit, the curtains drawn, and the band sit down, each feminine individual armed with a little bag or reticule in which she carries her gold or notes; silver is more or less unnecessary, for "the set" play high, and scorn pettifogging. All through the afternoon the play goes on, and occasionally even the dining hour is forgotten over the green cloth. Sometimes the tryst is after dinner, and then the play goes on till the small hours of the morning, varied by excursions to supper in the next room, which, however, does not detain the players long. It is hardly surprising if feminine passions get occasionally heated at these entertainments; words rage high between the fair combatants at times, and the bystanders can certainly testify that the knowledge displayed of "nervous Anglo-Saxon" is like Sam Weller's knowledge of London, "extensive and peculiar!"



The racing woman's topics of conver-

sation are to a certain degree limited, and in fact may be divided into two sections, lamentations and jubilations, prophetic or otherwise, over the results or prospects of her book and racing matters generally, or highly-spiced scandal about her personal friends. Unlike the eel who is so well supplied with hearts that he can afford to stow a second one in his tail, the racing woman is possessed of no heart at all.

Having probably but little to start with, the life she has adopted has extinguished the small amount she ever possessed. Living more or less by her wits, always trying to steal a march, or a man, from her feminine neighbours, she finally becomes a kind of female Ishmael in secret, her hand against every woman, every woman's hand against her. All below the surface, or behind backs, however, for face to face, except for occasional rows in the Stand at Newmarket, or around the poker-table, when epithets are interchanged with astounding fluency, the racing women are all smiles, kisses, and whispered confidences; and in fact their candour during their outbreaks of hostility is only to be equalled by their duplicity on ordinary occasions. No reputation is sacred to the typical racing woman; it may be her dearest friend, or her dearest friend's daughter, whose good name is at stake, it matters not; and with a spicy *bon mot* and a shrug of the shoulders, the snowball of slander is given a further shove on its accumulating roll down hill. The victims may think themselves lucky if some one of their kind friends does not happen to be a correspondent of one of the lowest sort of "Society paper," in which case the spicy *bon mot* is given a more widespread circulation. *Les louves se mangent entre elles!* It is when the racing woman grows old that all these typical characteristics get accentuated. While she is more or less young and attractive, her mind is more or less occupied with her many flirtations; she is soothed by the atmosphere of flattery in which she lives; and, chiefly interested in the preening of her own plumes in the sunshine, she does not often give a peck at the feathers of one of her companions. Life is pleasant enough for her to say: "Live and let live!" But when middle age and wrinkles commence to steal over her, when the adorers fly off to

faire la roue around some younger pullets, then the typical characteristics of the racing woman assert themselves. To her it is denied to grow old gracefully; she is not the clay of which the white-haired *grandes dames* are made. To the bitter end she will play the game she has played so long; and dressed in all the colours of the rainbow, with the hat of a girl of sixteen perched on a *toupet* of butter-coloured



hair, and a *veste Figaro* outlining the amplitude of her charms, she continues to haunt every race-meeting as regularly as the bookmakers; most of whom, indeed, are her personal acquaintances, if not friends. Her bitter tongue always ensures her a surrounding circle of young men, who are in ecstacies over her strongly-spiced remarks, and who find her knowledge of the various training stables and their secrets useful. Of women of her own age and standing she has never made a friend, but

people more or less "kootoo" to her if thrown into her society, from a noble and elevating fear of her tongue. They might spare themselves the trouble, for her tongue will not spare them.

Unlike in everything else, the racing woman is also unlike the true sporting woman in having no distinctive mark of dress. When young, while "her face is her fortune," she usually dresses well, and almost the entirety of her winnings find their way into the pockets of Elise, Reily, Mason and Co. With her age, her taste deteriorates like everything else about her; she still goes to expensive dressmakers, but no longer submits to their guidance, and nothing is too showy or too loud, nor above all too young. Verily these ancient yet frisky lambs are by no means sparing of the mint sauce which they hope will draw the line between them and mutton!

One distinctive feature the typical racing woman does possess, however. With very few exceptions, she rarely adventures herself on horseback; her acquaintance with horse-flesh is limited to the transactions of the betting ring, and she displays a wise reluctance to embark on any greater intimacy. Occasionally, at the July meetings at Newmarket, she consents to ride some quiet cob, for the simple reason that she would see but little of the racing if she did not, and that little she would have to survey alone, *minus* the male surroundings necessary, if not to her salvation, at least to her well-being. On every other occasion the racing woman prefers the shelter of the Stand, the pastures of the saddling paddock, or the box-seat of a drag, at race-meetings; and in the Park, a victoria, or a chair under the trees, from which she can pass strictures on her friends on horseback or on foot, satisfies her modest aspirations.

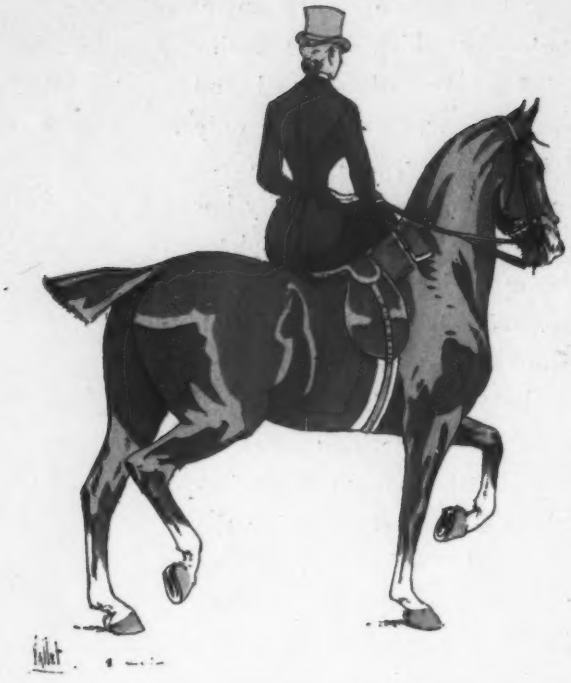
In any survey of English sporting women, it would be impossible to omit mention of the racing woman; otherwise it would be pleasanter to do so, for there is nothing to be said in her favour, except that while young she is usually outwardly pleasing to the eye, and fair to look upon.

* * *

The third type is again as different to the preceding two as they are

different to each other. Without the love of nature which is the mainspring of the one, or the love of gain and notoriety which is the mainspring of the other, the hunting woman is the woman of a small and jealousy-guarded *coterie*. She may have been country-bred, but only to a limited extent; she has no real love of the country, and only cares for it from the hunting point of view, because she can thereby gratify her vanity in a particular way. If she had been thrown into another society, she would have adopted another manner of life with the same listless precision that she brings to the hunting-field. She has married a rich man who habitually spends his winters at Melton; he hunts most days in the week, and all the men in the place do the same. In self-defence against ennui and yielding to the imitativeness so strong in English female character, she hunts too. The exercise brings a certain amount of excitement with it; her vanity is flattered by the consciousness of being the best mounted and best "turned-out" woman in the field, and by the number of men who are willing to pilot her across country; and besides all this, there is the ride home in the evening with the aforesaid pilot! Who shall say that hunting is not a noble and exhilarating sport? The only alternative for the woman to hunting under such circumstances is to stay at home most of the day, varied by a drive to the meet in the morning.

She and her husband have probably taken a furnished house, in, or just out of, Melton or Grantham, for the winter months; she has no possible occupation all day, having neither of the chief affections of the country, the care of the garden and the animals. She would not care for either if she had them; she is a woman who likes society in general, and men's society in particular. Her husband and his friends return about 6 o'clock, tired and dirty, when they retire to the smoking-room sofas for a snooze before the dressing bell rings. The fact of their hostess yawning with boredom in her sitting-room leaves them quite unmoved; a woman who understands nothing about hunting does not interest them. At dinner she only hears endless accounts of runs that she has not seen, "good going" that she has not witnessed, and technicalities that she does not understand. As may be imagined it does not take much of this



kind of experience, to make a woman without resources in herself see that if she intends to hold her own in the society in which she finds herself, and, above all, maintain her empire over her male surroundings, she must "do in Turkey as the Turkeys do," and take to horse and hound. The matter lies in a nutshell : hunting and men's society; no hunting and solitude, *plus* deadly boredom!

But a love, or rather a habit of hunting developed under such circumstances, always betrays its superficiality to the close observer. While the real sporting woman is watching with the greatest interest the working of each individual hound, and grows quite excited at every whimper in the covert, the hunting woman sits calm and unmoved, interested, not in the hounds or even in the horses around her, but solely in the cut and set of the habits worn by the other women present at the meet. The set of the tie and the pin that fastens it; the amount of red waistcoat visible at neck and waist; whether the habit bears the unmistakable hand of Busvine or not; and whether the boot just peeping below the skirt is a "butcher" or a "Newmarket," these are the only questions that occupy the mind of the hunting woman as she sits on her well-trained hunter (who knows a great deal more about hunting than she will ever know!) waiting till it may please the fox to break covert. There is no impatience on her part to get away



across country, she is never impatient about anything, and even a brisk forty minutes will hardly shake her out of the correctness of her apparent apathy. Hunting means to her an opportunity of dressing in a garb peculiarly calculated to shew off a good figure, and has also the merit of throwing her into the society of the men she prefers; what can she possibly ask more, she would answer, if an interrogation could hope for a candid and truthful reply. Everything else is looked upon only as a means to an end; horses and hounds have no individuality or reality to her, she looks upon them simply as parts of a machinery which she uses for her own purposes. She is not noisy, or loudly self-assertive, like the racing woman; both in the hunting-field and elsewhere, the *chic* of the hunting woman is to be quiet and impassive, and she is always quiet in her dress. The "freemasonry" in the hunting set is very great, they seldom allow an "outsider" amongst them until he has performed a lengthy novitiate; and both in town and country the men and women of this set are seldom seen in any other set than their own restricted one. No doubt joys are tasted amongst them; everything leads one to suppose so; but it must be owned that when they deign to quit their seclusion for ordinary Society, these silent and apathetic women seem distinctly dull. And it would be small wonder if they were dull; possessed of neither the energetic common sense of the real sporting woman, nor the restless vitality of the racing woman, they have no volition except to follow like Indian squaws in the steps of their conquerors!

However, to give them their due, though they may be dull, they are not viperish; they may, and no doubt do, talk scandal to a certain degree, behind each other's backs, but there is none of the suppressed bitterness, the stinging venom, which makes the elderly racing woman a creature calculated to appal the stoutest heart! They are apathetic about everything except their personal vanity, but as long as that is fed with a sufficient amount of flattery, they are by no means ill-natured to the world at large.

Even the newspapers affected by the three types differ as much as they do themselves. While No. 1. (bless her) reads the "Field" for its practical advice on all country sporting matters, and the stud books for

their (to her) necessary information, No. 2 revels in the "Pink 'un," the "Licensed Victualler's Gazette," and for Sundays the "Referee;" while No. 3, after skimming through the "Field" and the "Country Gentleman" to find personal notices of her prowess in the hunting-field, settles down to the perusal of the weekly "Society papers" which purvey her with accounts of the movements of her friends and acquaintances, with sometimes a dash of scandal about them thrown in, which she is nothing loth to disseminate at the meet next morning.

Thus it will be seen that varieties in the genus "sporting women" are to be found which will well repay study to a lover of his species!—

WENTWORTH SANDYS.





THE DUCHESSE D'ABRANTÈS

The Duchesse d'Abrantès lived over fifty years. She was one of the ladies who gave tone to reviving society, after a revolution which had reduced all things to the same level. Beloved by one of the comrades of the man who unmade Europe and remade France, she was associated with all the great events of the time. She saw everything, she was a part of all she saw; and as though to remain to the last the mirror of that age of marvels, she passed away crushed and deserted. She had written her *Mémoires,* and the work did not yield enough to save her from destitution. The widow of the hero of Nazareth, the former "Gouvernante" of Paris, the wife of the ex-Viceroy of Portugal, would have been buried in a pauper's grave if King Louis-Philippe had not come forward with a thousand francs.

Laure Permon in her childhood received a lesson which was to teach her how fortune may be taken by storm. Her father, an old army contractor, on the point of becoming a farmer-general's partner when the Revolution broke out, died a ruined man. His widow and children went to live in a small house in the Chaussée-d'Antin, the smallness of which was its chief attraction. Thither in the evenings would come a little general in a sadly threadbare coat, who, as he tossed his neglected hair, done up into half-powdered dog's ears, would talk now and then of his lucky star. Whilst he waited for it to shine, he would fish for an invitation to dinner.

The little Bonaparte had tramped about all day in the mud, walking himself footsore in order to obtain employment, which had been refused him by the stupidity of a minister. When he came to Madame Permon's, he would place his muddy little boots on the firedogs, making the damp leather smoke, whilst the mistress of the house would put her handkerchief, steeped with rose-water, to her face. But one day, on the 14th Vendémiaire, in the fourth year of the Republic, the little general made his appearance in shining boots, plumed hat, and embroidered coat. On the 13th, Barras had selected him to crush the Royalists. Thenceforth Bonaparte held the chief command of the home forces. His star had risen.

Society, which had been scattered far and wide, was slowly reconstructed in Paris, and yet nobody felt himself sufficiently confident in the morrow to make a show of luxury. There were no entertainments in private houses. People of fashion went to the public balls at Tivoli, at Marbeuf, at the Hôtel de Richelieu, and particularly at Thélusson's. Here the dancing was in a vast rotunda. Mademoiselle de Permon was now thirteen, and her mother began to bring her out. One evening she saw there the woman who still held sway over Barras and the Directory, and who continued to reign as queen by the power of beauty.

Madame Tallien was a second revelation for the future Duchesse d'Abrantès. Amidst the sudden transformations which those extraordinary times brought before the young girl's eyes, nothing astonished her. She was herself the daughter of an adventurous stock. Her mother was descended from a family of exiles, famous enough to have grown somewhat fabulous. Some time afterwards, when as the wife of General Junot she explained her origin to her husband's comrades in arms, who were not precisely of divine extraction, they must have been astounded by it. "You must know, gentlemen, who command the army of the French Empire, that the last Emperor of Constantinople, David Comnenus, had several sons, one of whom contrived to escape from the sword of the Turks. He took refuge at first in the Peloponnesus, and later on he came to Corsica, where he founded a colony with a few of his companions. He was called Constantine Stephanopoulos; and he was my ancestor." It is easy to imagine the amazement produced by this statement on Marshal

Lefèvre, Duc de Dantzig, whose father was a miller. Napoleon, less credulous, referred at St. Helena to the ancestors of Madame d'Abrantès. He knew the last bearer of the name of Constantine, who seemed to him only a rough farmer, what we should call a rustic. Nevertheless, his son Demetrius had in 1784 obtained letters patent from Louis XVI., recognizing him as the direct descendant of the Byzantine Emperors. This "Prince de Comnène," penniless as he was, must have thought himself lucky to marry his sister to a man with a post in the Treasury. The daughter of Comnène became Madame Permon.

Fifteen years later, Madame *de* Permon, free and a widow, being settled in Paris, was associated—in her character as a Comnène—with the relics of society under the *ancien régime;* but she had also known the Bonaparte family in Corsica. The clever lady knew how to keep on good terms with the past and to cultivate the future. The young Laure, surrounded by ladies of the day gone by, was none the less a friend of Caroline and Pauline. If we may trust her *Mémoires,* she only just missed being placed a good deal nearer to Cæsar, for Bonaparte is said to have conceived the idea of marrying his sister Pauline to Albert Permon, and of himself marrying Madame Permon. Thus Madame Permon would have been Josephine, and her daughter Laure would have been Hortense. The fortunes of the Beauharnais certainly hung by a slender thread.

In the month of Fructidor, in the year V (1797), the Jacobins, perceiving that the country was slipping from their grasp, resolved upon a *coup d'État.* Many *émigrés,* whose return had been tolerated, were again obliged to keep in the background. Madame Permon's drawing-room would have been deserted in consequence if its ordinary composition had not been a *marqueterie.* The Bonapartes, and what was known as the Bonaparte set, who were always to be seen there, were fairly numerous. The Directory, which grew more and more depreciated and decried, had nothing else to boast of except the Italian victories, the conqueror, and his family. Joseph Bonaparte had just become one of the Five Hundred, amongst whom his brother Lucien already sat. The beauty of Pauline, just married to General Leclerc, constituted her, young as she was, a rival whom the new folk loved to pit against Madame Tallien.

One evening she appeared at Madame Permon's in antique costume. She had her hair done up with little bands of tiger's skin surmounted with golden grapes—the head-dress of the Bacchantes. Her dress was of Indian muslin, sewn with golden vine branches; above that she wore a tunic adorned with the same embroidery as the robe, and of the most correct Greek shape, with the girdle fixed under her bosom, consisting of a broad gold band, clasped by an enormous and splendid antique jewel. On her bare arms she had gold bracelets and cameos. "All the ladies bridled at the sight." Laure Permon was still of that happy age at which the feminine soul is more disposed to admiration than to envy; "she thought it was a goddess whom she saw."

A year later Bonaparte returned from Egypt. It was at Madame Permon's, in the month of Vendémiaire, in the year VII, that the news of this much desired event was received. Albert Permon, who had it from Joseph Bonaparte and the Directeur Gohier at the same moment, carried it to his mother's. They were playing at "loto-dauphin." The young man came in looking so serious and excited that Madame Permon said to him, with a laugh : "Why, you could not make more ado if the Republic were coming to an end!"

"Indeed," he answered, "it comes to about the same thing. Bonaparte is in France." People looked at each other without saying a word; everybody was absorbed in thought.

Bonaparte as First Consul made peace with all our enemies, and presently even with the English. His generals, having time on their hands, looked after their private affairs. Andoche Junot was one of the youngest of them; but he was the oldest, and at that time the most intimate companion of the leader. He was the Commandant of Paris. Junot desired to marry, and he made proposals for Mademoiselle Permon. It was a brilliant match, and the mother was quite aware of it. Her delight was so great that it made her forget her imperial ancestors; a general of the modern Cæsar was good enough for her.

Cæsar displayed his satisfaction with the choice of his lieutenant, and he gave ample proof of it by bestowing a hundred thousand francs upon him, to which he added forty thousand as a wedding present. He referred



to this marriage during his captivity in St. Helena; and the *Mémorial,* which contains several unkind things about his former generals, introduces one of the coarsest of them in this connection. Madame d'Abrantès has quoted it in her *Mémoires :* "My friends could say whether my marriage took place because I was a Comnène—— At any rate my mother would have been a clever magician if she had induced a man who was a thorough Republican, a child of the Revolution who had risen by his own merits, to take for his wife a girl in no way beautiful, without fortune, and simply because her ancestors had reigned at Constantinople three or four centuries ago."

Who can say? Republicans have been known to possess these weaknesses. Later on this particular one readily accepted the title of a duke.

We give a portrait of this candid lady, who confesses that she was not beautiful, and it may be judged whether the model knew herself sufficiently well. Various engravings which reproduce her features have been preserved in the *Bibliothèque Nationale.* Almost all belong to the period when the Governor's wife, having turned author, "accepted wages from a publisher."

Two of these engravings represent her half-length, in the unbecoming dress of 1825 or 1830. It even seems as though the artist had taken a delight in reproducing it with all its vulgarity. This is no duchess, it is a mere blue-stocking, with something of the mean and ugly—a blue-stocking impelled by poverty to write. The famous lady has her neck and shoulders cruelly elongated in an ill-shaped collar and a tippet of some common material. She wears curls after the fashion of the day; her eyes are large and sparkling; but there is a decided hooked nose. Above the lips we can see an awkward fold, almost a cleft; the mouth is shapeless, and nothing but the freshness of youth could formerly have concealed its thorough lack of beauty. Those days have been left far behind; Madame d'Abrantès was by this time forty-five.

A curious drawing of Gavarni's shows us the authoress at full length. Here we have the same tippet, and beneath it there is neither beauty nor figure. The sleeves of the dress, wide beneath the shoulders, are gathered in at the wrists; the skirt is round, and the folds hang stiffly,

like so many organ pipes. The same curls, black as ink, enclose the face. The type is sharply enough defined to raise a suspicion of some ironical intention in the artist. Gavarni's pencil always has a dash of satire.

Another portrait of 1826, signed Jules Boissy, is more flattering. There is no longer the blue-stocking; we find once more the woman of fashion, ruined, but not decayed. The drawing has a very pleasant touch, and admirably renders the delicate melancholy of the face. The carefully arranged locks form a figure eight above the head, light curls fall down on the brow. The eyes are charming; the blemishes of the profile do not appear; and the whole picture gives us a good idea of a woman who was seductive without being beautiful. The sitter for this portrait is not here dressed like a beggarly scribbler. The shoulders are covered by a bodice with graceful folds; the sleeves of the dress are *à gigots;* the hands emerge long and soft, crossed on the lap. We are the more inclined to believe in the fidelity of this drawing because it reproduces in the main, and with much less refinement, the delightful portrait which we publish, as also another of a much earlier date—Laure Permon in her wedding-dress.

In this the sitter is seventeen years old. The bride wears the robe which she has herself described in her *Mémoires*—a robe of Indian muslin, sewn with satin stitch, with open lace and a train; the body having long sleeves, which were at that time called *manches Amadis*. On her head is a little cap of Brussels lace, and on the cap a little crown of orange blossoms, from which there hangs a long veil of English lace. Willingly enough, no doubt, the writer has forgotten to mention a double necklet of pearls round her throat, and falling on a bosom fairly rounded for so young a bride. The fact is that her love of jewellery afterwards caused her as much grief as joy. Napoleon sternly reproved her for it.

Junot at this time was under thirty. Of him also there are plenty of portraits. Let us take first that which shows him as Adjutant-General of the Army of Italy. The sheepish profile is almost like that of an animal; it is the face of a young soldier which seems to be animated neither by a spark of wit nor by a breath of soul. The man was to be created at the same time as his fortune. Isabey painted him twice; first in the



uniform of a general of division, on horseback, then as colonel-in-chief of Hussars, in the uniform worn by Junot at the coronation of the Emperor. Gros began his portrait; it was never more than a sketch, but it was engraved. The First Consul had commissioned this picture, desiring to immortalize the features of the victor of Nazareth. In that famous battle Junot, with three hundred Frenchmen, attacked and put to flight four thousand Turks. Bonaparte decreed that three hundred copies should be printed of an order of the day, as a kind of certificate of honour, and distributed amongst the families of these three hundred brave men.

After her marriage Laure Permon led a brilliant life. The Emperor distinguished her for a long time with his kindness and generosity, but afterwards he found fault with the great extravagance of "Monsieur and Madame Junot." At St. Helena he more than once expressed himself with a severity which was studiously recorded by those whom Madame d'Abrantès calls "the editors of the *Mémorial*." "The money I gave to Junot," he said, "was past counting; and he was always in debt. With no credit to himself, he wasted vast treasures."

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It is clearly proved, then, and by Madame d'Abrantès herself, that she was not beautiful. She makes a point of repeating it, and gives us proof of it. She had no need to be beautiful, possessing something better than an advantage derived from nature alone and from the chance of her caprice, which after all creates no more than trivial merits, since neither the heart nor the mind, neither wealth of imagination nor vigour of soul has anything to do with it. It is not your beauty who makes a fully equipped woman, and that is what Laure Permon, when she became Madame Junot, prided herself on being. She had made an ideal for herself, modelled in part on the ladies whom she used to meet in her mother's drawing-room at the end of the last century, and in part on her own mother.

But it is clear that both she and her mother had too much of the Greek blood, quickened by the rough strength of Corsica, too warm a temperament, too redundant a nature. The daughter often tells us of her mother's impetuous outbreaks; and she herself was not always thor-

oughly at ease in the Consular, or, as it afterwards became, the Imperial Court, which was as much under discipline as a regiment. She, too, had her outbreaks. Napoleon would say, with a laugh : "Little Madame Junot is always so hot-headed!" The young general's wife, and later on, the duchess, could not run well in harness.

Does not the portrait which we reproduce bear witness to the inward strife which went on for thirteen years, until at last she exposed herself to "utter disgrace" by her rebellions and pretentions, which finally brought the master down upon her in a great rage, and which amused him so much at a distance that the remembrance of them at St. Helena put him into a good humour? Observe those loose flowing veils wherewith the Governor's lady envelopes herself. Under that light gauze which softens her features you can see the eyes flashing. They speak, indeed they speak too much. Vanities on the alert, appetites rendered keen by luxury, the sparkle of pleasure, of all that in our days we imply by high life, break forth in that subtle look, which is circumspect none the less. It has the fondness of desire, the boldness of a behaviour resolutely planned out for any lot which may befall; but we can read in it also a constantly menaced rebellion of disappointed hopes, and more of the spirit of enterprise than of patience, constancy, and discretion.

The favour in which Junot was held might have been brief enough; its brilliant dawn very nearly proved to be its sinister evening twilight—extinct almost as soon as born with him who dropped it from his "little hand." For it is well known—and Madame d'Abrantès takes delight in frequently repeating it—that Bonaparte's hand was small and plump like that of a woman; the world "lay in a slender palm." Mademoiselle de Permon had scarcely become one of the leaders of fashion in the new Court when the plot of the Rue Saint-Nicaise broke out.

The Commandant of Paris was head of the police. In the exercise of his secret functions he looked only to the First Consul, and his real business was to control the action of Fouché, the Minister, and of Dubois, the Prefect of Police. Hence the watchful hatred of the first-named, which pursued the Commandant in certain gallant freaks, accompanied by one or two little excesses to which Junot, newly-married, and married for love

as he was, freely abandoned himself. In the terrible circumstances which had made the whole of France acutely feel how a simple man prevented her from falling again into anarchy, the Commandant's police had not shown itself more perspicacious than that of the Minister or that of the Prefect. Junot was furiously angry, and perhaps he was wrong to drown his anger in champagne at the house of the restaurant-keeper Méot.

It was the 5th of Nivôse, in the year IX (December 26th, 1800) the attempt having been made on the 3rd. Madame Junot had been slightly indisposed, and, feeling better, had gone out to dine at her mother's. Junot, tired with the movements of the day, on foot, on horseback, and in his carriage, had returned home and gone to bed. When his wife reached home she approached the bed, and stooping over her husband said : "Why, he is asleep already." He sprang up with a bound, his mind full of the infernal machine, and in the fire which still burned in the grate, fancied that he saw the assassin's lighted match. He had no arms, but gave a terrible kick, which caught his wife full in the breast, and sent her rolling to the other end of the room. It caused her to bring up blood; but how could she resent this nightmare of Junot which gave such ample proof of his fidelity to the First Consul? Next day nothing was spoken of at the Tuileries but the general's nightmare.

Junot displayed a combination of qualities amongst which none seems to have been specially excellent, though some were brilliant, and his faults were endurable, but aggravated by his too rapid rise. The same cause had stimulated his wife's thirst for publicity and craving for change and company. He wanted to have the finest horses in Paris; he laid in wines at a cost of 200,000 francs. She, on her side, strove to be always the best-dressed woman, whether she had to attend the receptions of Madame Bonaparte, or went to the theatre. She gave grand banquets at her own house, whereat, true to her policy, always anxious to show that if by her position she belonged to the new world, by her birth she belonged to the old, she would place a Comte de Damas beside General Lannes, and a La Rochefoucauld beside General Duroc. These dinners were brilliant, and there were no houses so well ordered to all appearance, so ill ordered in reality, as that of Monsieur and Madame Junot. Both lived in a state

of intoxication with their splendid destiny, young, eager, and lavish, convinced that they would always be amongst the grandest and happiest in this fascinating reign of happiness and grandeur.

Junot was a good husband, though *volage,* as people said in those days. He loved his wife; but did she love him? She behaved admirably to him, and still more so to his memory; she has been able to furnish explanations of his frolics, to paint them in hues which excuse weakness, and put another colour on doubtful actions; she has contrived to make the most of the generous aspects of his character and of the finer features of his life. Junot was not an ignorant soldier. Sprung from the middle class, he had received a liberal education, he was well read, and even an excellent Latin scholar, "knowing Horace and Virgil by heart." In many respects he had refined tastes; for example, he had formed the best library in Paris, at a time when this critical task was still easy, the remnants of the collections pillaged during the Revolution springing up as it were from the soil. And finally, Junot was one of the bravest of the brave; and courage holds powerful sway over the feminine heart.

Nevertheless, Madame Junot has never spoken of her husband except in terms unlikely to deceive those who are able to read private thoughts beneath an author's words. She had nothing but the calmest feeling of tenderness for her life-companion, absolute confidence in the heroic zeal with which he discharged his duty when on military service, but less assurance when he was employed on other missions, and always a few doubts as to the capacity of his mind. This is why she went with him on his mission to Portugal, and afterwards to Spain. She was quite sure to know of his intentions and his mistakes, Junot being one of those men who think aloud. He used to tell his wife the instructions and orders which he received from Paris; she set him right if it seemed that he did not interpret them correctly. But unfortunately she sometimes made mistakes herself. She has related her own errors. At an early age she formed the habit of making notes on the occurrences of her life. If necessity itself had not subsequently made her take up the pen, she migth still have written her *Mémoires*. Only in that case she would certainly not have filled eighteen volumes.



They who look to works of this kind for the inner history of an epoch—and in this case so extraordinary an epoch—will not complain of the prolixity. The *Mémoires* of the Duchesse d'Abrantès, a curious medley of very precise views and absolute hallucinations, of valuable information and tittle-tattle, a thoroughly feminine production, are instructive from every point of view; but above all they show us how the events in which Napoleon was the chief actor made the fortunes of his associates, and how these latter now and then eagerly set about ruining themselves.

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On the 18th of Brumaire, in the year VIII (1800) there happened at Paris an incident which appeared to be prophetic—what the ancients used to call a sign. On that day, the anniversary of that on which the grasp of Cæsar was laid upon France, the lioness in the Jardin des Plantes gave birth to three cubs. Madame Bonaparte was giving a women's *déjeuner* at the Tuileries, and after the meal was over she took her pretty guests to make inquiries about the mother at the "Jardin du Roi," as it used to be called. Madame Junot was one of the party. A little later she was one of the regular guests at the "Malmaison Wednesdays."

Before long Bonaparte thought it fitting and pleasant, during these evenings which refreshed him after the labours of the day, to keep perpetually before his eyes a bevy of young women. He selected them carefully, Madame Junot amongst the first. Up to that time they had no titles; they were the "ladies of the château." Their husbands were generally detained at Paris by their duties, and Junot in particular was pledged not to leave the city by night. One morning Madame Junot was sleeping the sleep of eighteen; a noise aroused her, and she saw the First Consul beside her couch. He held in his hand an enormous packet of letters, which he began to open after calmly sitting down. He had come to run through his correspondence by the side of his little friend of other days.

Next morning he came again, entering through a room occupied by the lady's maid, who evidently had not dared to forbid his approach. Madame Junot had taken this strange freak, which promised to become

of daily occurrence, lightly enough. But after a few mornings Bonaparte, coming into the room, was much astonished to hear a man's voice, and that with a touch of anger in it, which said : "Good heavens! General, what do you want in our wives' rooms at this hour?"

It was the voice of Junot, whom his wife had kept with her in spite of the strict orders of the master. Bonaparte beat a retreat. But in the course of the following day, finding himself alone with Madame Junot, he looked at her fixedly, and said : "I suppose you think yourself very clever?"

This adventure, however, did not mar the fortunes of the young couple. Bonaparte wished to stand sponsor to Junot's first child. As a baptismal gift he gave the father a mansion in the Champs-Élysées and a hundred thousand francs to furnish it with; he settled on him a pension of thirty thousand francs from his privy purse, gave him the "Grand Aigle" of the Legion of Honour, and made him colonel-in-chief of Hussars. But, on the other hand, the Emperor appointed Madame Junot lady-in-waiting to Madame Lætitia, his mother, and not to the new Empress. She was not satisfied with this; but the Emperor said to her bluntly : "I don't like caprices."

Between these repeated evidences of high favour, Junot continued to commit a few follies. Bonaparte was well aware of the characteristic indiscretion of his "first aide-de-camp," for Junot still bore this title. Fouché's police reported to him, as having taken place at Madame Permon's house some time before, certain conversation of a royalist tinge.

He immediately conceived the idea of removing Junot to a distance, whilst improving his position. The idea suddenly took shape in 1806, and that was how Junot came to be nominated to the Portuguese embassy.

The successor to this splendid position did justice to himself at once. "I am not cut out for diplomacy," he said. The Emperor knew it. He even anticipated some outbreak from Junot, and some little freak from his wife, for he took care to put them both on their guard. "Be circumspect," he said to Madame Junot. "Understand me; by circumspect I mean not a trifler, not a chatterbox."

The Queen of Portugal was mad, and the Prince, her son, was Regent.

His wife the Princess, measured four feet four inches—and this only on one side, for the two sides were not equal. Nevertheless, this royal cripple took into her head to cast eyes at Junot. As for the Prince, seeing the ambassador in his uniform as colonel-in-chief of Hussars, nothing would satisfy him but to supply himself with a suit like that of the handsome Frenchman.

He carried out his intention, and the diplomatic body suppressed their laughter. The ambassador's wife enjoyed it all immensely, save when she had to put on her *paniers*—for those wretched *paniers,* in which a French lady of 1805 had forgotten how to move about, were still in fashion at the Court of Portugal. Meanwhile, Junot's mission was successful. The Prince Regent agreed to close his ports to the English, and the Emperor was satisfied; but Junot was summoned home for the Austerlitz campaign. The Emperor won his most brilliant victory; but alas! at the same time we lost the battle of Trafalgar, and Lisbon was thrown open again to the Englishmen. This breach of faith was to cost the Prince Regent dear. Madame Junot returned to Paris. She amused the Emperor with her lively stories about the Portuguese Court. He listened and laughed, calling her by the name which, as he declared, suited her best : "*Allez! petite peste!*"

The "little pest" began her waiting on "Madame Mère," who had known her when a little girl, and loved her well. In the winter of 1805-6 there were festivities, and at one ball the Emperor expressed a desire for a quadrille. The ladies wore four colours, white, red, green, and blue, with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and sapphires. They wore caps of black velvet, with white feathers, and some one had conceived the stupid idea of putting precisely similar caps on the gentlemen, who were dressed in white velvet. There was a lamentable want of taste in the new Court.

A secret desire inflamed all these upstart heroes to match the representatives of the *ancien régime,* whom they innocently thought that they were copying. They delighted to set themselves everywhere in the place of the grand people of other days. Junot was made Governor of Paris, and the young couple were "dazzled by this crowning mark of favour." Immediately Monsieur and Madame Junot are anxious to play the high rôle

in every respect. They had a mansion at Bièvre which was "no longer suitable" for them; they bought Le Raincy, formerly in the possession of the younger branch of the Bourbons, and which then belonged to the banker Ouvrard. The Governor's wife resolved to have her boudoir "in the chamber of the Duc d'Orléans."

The Emperor said to Junot: "After Berthier, you stand first in my esteem." Having reached this acme of good fortune, there is nothing left for a man but to fall again. Junot began to lose ground. One day, one of Napoleon's sisters—we will not say which of them—showed airs to Madame Junot because she was *enceinte*. In the evening the Princess clumsily passed a letter to Junot, in his wife's presence, in the carriage which was taking the three of them back from Saint-Cloud. The story got about. The Emperor, soon made aware of it, was terribly angry. "You, Junot," he said, "compromising my sister! You!" Madame d'Abrantès, when relating the story adds: "I do not hesitate to attribute all our misfortunes to this unhappy *relation* of my husband."

Junot left Paris. He was placed in command of the army which went to inflict punishment on Portugal for her bad faith. The House of Braganza ceased to reign. Thus the Emperor had given his oldest comrade an important command; but he looked upon him thenceforth with a far sterner eye. When he went to Spain, to assume the command of his army, the general indulged himself in a new intrigue at Bagnères-de-Bigorre. He was even unlucky enough to lose in this place a bracelet of light hair, which, in the following year, the mayor of the town solemnly forwarded over to Madame Junot, as she was stopping at Bagnères, saying that he had recognized the colour of her locks. Now Madame Junot was a brunette.

She had the good sense to smile at this; but the Emperor caused a crushing letter to be written to Junot by the Minister of War. Meanwhile the general entered Lisbon, and the royal family took ship for Brazil. The Emperor considered that this was a success deserving of reward, and seemed to give the reward with reluctance. He summoned Madame Junot, who found "a frown on the brow of Jove."

"Madame," he said, "I am going to take Le Raincy off your hands——



You are pouting as a child of four would pout if I took its toy away—— What I am doing is in the interest of that foolish Junot. Le Raincy would have ruined him." A few days later Napoleon made Junot Duc d'Abrantès. Madame Junot was congratulated. "Now you are a duchess, and with the prettiest name of all the company!"

But the Emperor took away the Governorship of Paris at the same time as Le Raincy, and the title of first aide-de-camp. In exchange he bestowed the post of Governor-General and Viceroy of Portugal, with a salary of 600,000 francs, and he bade the new duchess "go and play at being a queen."

She went, but came back again. In society and at Court there was a lively rumour and a great sensation. The Viceroy Junot was reported to have sent his wife five hundred carats of diamonds in the rough, as a handsel of his fresh good fortune. Portugal must be a mine of Golconda, to judge from the duchess's expenditure. Le Raincy had been taken from her; she bought the Folie St. James at Neuilly, built a theatre and the finest conservatory known, after that of Malmaison, gave parties, and entertained many foreigners, Russians in particular. Now trouble was already springing up between the French and Russian Empires. Madame "la petite reine" was again summoned. It was no longer safe to presume upon the familiarity which the close relations of 1795 still kept alive between the master and his humble subject, or to play with the claws of the lion. "Remember that it is your duty to obey," he said, "or you will have to reckon with me." A few days later all the enemies and rivals of the too fortunate couple made sure that the Junots had reached the end of their tether. The Governor-General of Portugal had just signed the Convention of Cintra, which ceded Lisbon to the English.

The Emperor, in fact, embittered by his first reverses in Spain, could not have been in a very indulgent mood; and it was this moment which Junot chose for writing to his wife the most outspoken letters on the exile of Madame Récamier, with whom he had formerly been in love. The simple soldier trusted to the secrecy of the post. But he was employed again, and received the command of a *corps d'armée* in Spain. Two

years later he led two divisions in Russia. Napoleon blamed his feebleness in this connection, and abused him in a couple of bulletins with a sort of jealous and bitter harshness, as though he took a pleasure in casting a slur on the glory of his old comrade. In 1813 the Duc d'Abrantès went to take over the government of the Illyrian Provinces, where he was attacked by a fever. He was brought home to Montbard, to the house of his father; and there he died.

If any one wishes to know how the Duchesse d'Abrantès was engaged during this long crisis in attempting to restore the fortunes of her husband, it is not the *Mémoires* that he must consult. In the *Mémoires* she relates her different conversations with the Emperor, and how she went to the Tuileries without fear and without reproach, with the whole truth on her lips. She must have spoken the truth, and fully believed it, about the ingratitude of the Emperor towards Junot, and about his harshness to Madame Récamier, and about many other dangerous matters. Once it seems the Emperor retorted : "What do you think can come of your obstinately braving me like this?"

In this connection we ought to read the *Mémorial of St. Helena*. Napoleon has recorded that strange scene. He relates with amusement how the duchess reproached him for "not having prevented the misfortune of poor Récamier." It is well known how that lovely creature, the idol of the time, whom Junot had loved in common with many others, suffered ruin as well as exile, her husband having fallen into difficulties. "But I should have challenged the gossip-mongers," cried the Emperor; "I should have been called Madame Récamier's lover!" And he adds : "Little Madame Junot was angry. I was treated by her like a young boy; so there was nothing left but to send her away, and leave her to her own devices."

* * *

From 1813 to 1837, twenty-four years were dragged out. It was one long and sad contrast to her former existence—a too grievous expiation. Junot's widow, who was left with several children, had by various intermediaries informed the Emperor that the father of the family had left

no fortune. Forsooth he knew it well! What could be said to him about fortune in 1814? Think of his own fortune, and that of the son so ardently longed for, whom he had made a king in his cradle!

Twenty-four years. Trial and adversity had not extinguished a spark of wit in the indomitable little Madame Junot, who had played so large a part at the Court of the conqueror of the world, and who had never yielded even to the conqueror. I have just read one of her letters, which turned up in a collection of autographs. It is addressed to a friend, and dated November 6th, 1837. It casually mentions the deplorable state of her health, her literary labours at the time, and a joke of Jules Janin's, who wrote one day in her private album this remarkable piece of nonsense : "After King Louis-Philippe, I know nothing more respectable than a blank sheet of paper." The letter ends thus : "Adieu. I beg you to pray for me to-night, just before midnight. It was at that time, on such a day as this, that my mother brought me into the world to suffer; for my sorrows have surpassed my joys."

The Duchesse d'Abrantès at one moment had been able to think that her fortunes were increased rather than overturned by the fall of the Empire. In 1814 the Abbé de Comnène, younger brother of the Prince Demetrius, and therefore her uncle, with her own brother Albert Permon, strongly urged her to make terms with the new Government. Junot's widow had firm supporters amongst the restored Bourbons. They would have backed her; and it must be supposed she did not know how to make use of them.

She had known Metternich; the Duke of Wellington sought for an introduction to her on the strength of certain reminiscences of the war in Spain. He had met Junot there on several occasions; he had courteously warned his enemy of the designs of a Spanish guerrilla chief, who had formed a little plot to carry off the wife of the French general. And finally Napoleon, since his disagreement with Russia in 1811, had been annoyed by the Duchesse d'Abrantès receiving many Russians. He must have had some ground for annoyance, for the Emperor Alexander went to "this victim" twice or thrice, like a gay prince and a welcome guest. The Czar at Madame d'Abrantès's house; that made a fine stir!

Michaud wrote : "The duchesse's house became a meeting-place for the Allies." This was a startling piece of gossip; and she had laid herself open to it by giving a dinner to Wellington. At the table were the Princes de Lichtenstein and various English generals. M. de Metternich came in after dinner.

But it was the visit of Alexander which created most indignation in some quarters and envy in others. The Czar desired to see the portrait of Junot painted by Gros after the battle of Nazareth. From the drawing-room in which she had received her august visitor she took him through the billiard-room, the library, containing "the finest collection in Europe," a large apartment "in the style of the dwellings of ancient times," the bedroom, another apartment, and finally the study, where the portrait hung. This description of actual circumstances shows us how the lady who died almost in a hovel was still able to live.

The library included a complete collection of Didot's books, with several unique copies, as, for instance, the *Daphnis and Chloe* printed on vellum, and illustrated by original drawings by Gérard and Prud'hon; the *Fables of La Fontaine,* with original drawings by Percier. But the gem of the collection was the "Lisbon Bible," a manuscript of the thirteenth century, bound up with the miniatures of Lulio Clavio, and making twelve volumes bound in black. Junot had brought it from Portugal, or rather carried it home with the intention of offering it to the Emperor. Napoleon gave it to him, and after his death ordered that it should be purchased for the Bibliothèque Nationale. The price had been fixed at 144,000 francs. Then came the invasion, and the business fell through. In the end, the Portuguese Minister at Paris asserted a claim to it ; and the duchess appealed in a fright to Louis XVIII. This royal bibliomaniac could well conceive that his brother of Portugal had set his heart on the treasure; but the same treasure made him envious. He considered that the Bible had become reduced into the possession of Madame d'Abrantès. He bought the "property," and Portugal could not help herself.

One afternoon in 1814 the wives of officers of the Imperial household were informed that they must go to the Tuileries and pay court to

Madame the Duchesse d'Angoulême. The Princess did not know them; she was obliged to ask their names; and when she addressed them she had some difficulty about giving them their titles. "You are Madame Junot?" "Yes, Madame!" "You have suffered greatly?" In the eyes of the daughter of Louis XVI., suffering was the strongest claim.

In those altered times, Madame Junot was truly wretched. Grief had been less potent with her than anger in view of the great disillusions which had followed the death of Junot. But now grief had its revenge. Her eldest son, Napoleon, had a "wretched *majorat*" in the *Grand Livre*. Be it observed that the *majorat* attached to the title of a duke under the Empire was 200,000 francs; but from being good, and even excellent, it became "wretched," since there was a chance of these two hundred thousand francs remaining unpaid. Fortunately, after the reception of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, it seemed a natural thing to ask an audience of the monarch. Louis XVIII. received the duchess kindly, spoke to her a little of Junot, and much of the Comnène family. The daughter of the Greek emperors felt herself much encouraged. The king had been well acquainted with Demetrius, her uncle; and it was to him that he one day gave such a good proof of his excellent memory by reciting the names of all the *curés* of Meudon. Madame d'Abrantès could not help laughing at this; and His Majesty laughed with her. The poor woman thought that she had gained her point.

The king never thought of her again. There are two letters in proof of it, both dated 1818, and addressed to Marshal Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, Minister of War. In the first she asks, in the consideration of the services of her husband, for a pension to enable her to bring up her family. The second letter shows that the first had remained unanswered. "Monsieur le Maréchal, you are the father of the army, and I show you my heart with confidence. I am in despair. My condition is terrible."

The widow, entirely sacrificed, made up her mind. She sold her splendour, and then her keepsakes. First the mansion and the Folie Saint-James; next her jewels, the famous Portuguese diamonds, the pearl necklace which had been given to her by the Empress Josephine, the godmother of her eldest son, all the *rivières*, all the *girandoles*, down

to the set of emeralds surrounded by small brilliants—her "morning set." The library followed the caskets. The King of England took the *Daphnis and Chloe;* the *Fables of La Fontaine* went to Russia. The remainder were purchased by Louis XVIII., and he doubtless thought that in this way he had done enough for the widow of a brilliant French general who "had not died in his service."

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In 1830 Madame d'Abrantès was at the Abbaye au Bois, one evening in July. From the terrace where she was walking with her son Napoleon she saw the approach of a howling and tattered crowd. She leaned on the young man's arm, for her emotion caused her to totter. The howlers marched beneath a vast tricoloured banner. And all the joys and glories which the *trois couleurs* had brought her, all the neglect and humiliations which had come with the *drapeau blanc,* her brilliant youth, the days of her power and wealth, with those of sadness and submission, the miserable autumn of her life—all her memories and all her bitterness passed before her eyes.

There are no longer any Bourbons in France; they who brought the country to wretchedness have turned their backs in exile. From the Orleanists she will ask nothing. She prepared her *Mémoires.* The first volume appeared in 1831, with an introduction intended to impress the public, for she summed it up in this phrase : "I was the only one who knew Napoleon."

Madame d'Abrantès was now forty-seven. At that age she took up her pen with the ardour of youth. To the compilation of her *Mémoires* from notes accumulated ever since her marriage, and especially since her journey to Spain in 1809-10, she soon added the writing of a romance in the fashion of that day, *L'Amirante de Castille.* The King of Rome had just died, and she wrote a poem on his melancholy destiny, and sent it to the Empress Marie Louise. This august and ill-fated lady was still addressed as "Your Majesty," though she was now no more than an Archduchess, and the sovereign of Parma. "I fear lest your Majesty, who is so skilled in this kind of composition, may have been a severe

judge." And certainly the author cannot have received from Parma the hoped-for evidence of favour. The rest of the *Mémoires* are hard upon Marie Louise.

Thenceforth Madame d'Abrantès lived on familiar terms with men and women of letters. It might be thought from her correspondence with several of these that this woman of agile and subtle mind, who devoted herself so frequently to intrigue, was not particularly clever at business. Balzac scolded her more than once on this head. A letter in 1833 gives us to understand that his friend had not followed certain advice which he had urged upon her. She was then at Versailles, which was to be her last refuge before Chaillot, where she died. Mame was the publisher of the *Mémoires*.

His one desire was to persuade her to change her publisher. He thought that he had lighted on the ideal trader in printed paper, the publisher of his dreams. "I fancy that I have discovered what I call 'live money'—— If 'Mammifer' should misbehave himself, say to him : 'My dear man, M. de Balzac has undertaken my business arrangements.' I will be your lawyer."

Poverty soon engulfed poor "Madame la Gouverneuse"—as Napoleon laughingly called her. She worked without intermission, and wore herself out in harness, writing articles for the *Revue de Paris* and the *Musée des Familles*. In a letter to Henry Berthoud, she said : "My dear friend, I had declared that I would no longer write for a journal, because this labour hinders me from that which employs my mornings and which is far more important to me. Nevertheless, if you would like a few articles I will give you some, and even some hitherto unpublished."

Within a few years, between 1830 and 1838, she produced some totally forgotten stories ; a "History of the Salons of Paris under Louis XVI. and under the Directory," a "Sketch of the Court of Spain, and of the Court of Madrid under Charles III.," etc. Work, followed by illness, did not triumph over the alert and vigorous spirit which never deserted her, either in peril or in adversity, either in Spain, amidst war and pestilence and burning towns, or in her Chaillot retreat, the lowest level of her poverty, and the threshold of death. She had still

a certain joy in her last trials, and it sprang from the fame which her son Napoleon was earning in Paris by his good looks and distinction of manners.

But this meteor of the Parisian sky had its eclipses—and then he was at Clichy. His mother, ignoring her own needs, laboured to get him away again. How did she contrive to bring up her four children, two daughters and two sons?—and how could she contribute to the support of the one who was her favourite?

The last relics of her existence of splendour had been dissipated for nearly a score of years when she came at length to the end of the struggle. One of Junot's former comrades had opened his purse for the widow, and this generous man, whose name we are unable to give, and who would have left a great name in history if the Emperor had not excelled all the other reputations of his time, died about 1820.

Madame d'Abrantès passed away at Chaillot on the 7th of June, 1838. The incidents which followed her death inspired Victor Hugo with a well-known poem, included amongst his *Les Rayons et les Ombres*—"A Laure, duchesse d'A." In a note to this poem, the poet wrote : "The Municipal Council of the City of Paris refused to grant six feet of earth in the cemetery of Père-Lachaise for the tomb of the widow of Junot, a former Governor of Paris. The Minister of the Interior, also, refused a block of marble for the tomb."

The friends of the deceased resolved to do without the grant of the Municipal Council and the marble of the minister, and a subscription was opened. The truth must be told; it yielded next to nothing. The author of the *Mémoires,* however, had her tomb erected by a Russian lady. It is in the Montmartre cemetery, in the 22nd section. It is a disk of white marble, placed on a slab of granite, with a medallion by David d'Angers, and crowned with a laurel branch, a ducal coronet, and the titles of her works. At the back there are two medallions surrounded with laurels, with these two inscriptions : "Laure d'Abrantès; Andoche Junot." On the granite slab are cut the names of two of the duchess's children who rest near her.—"Andoche Napoleon Junot—1851;" "Constance Aubert, née Junot d'Abrantès—1881." The other son has been long dead;

his daughter Josephine, who was at first intended for a religious life, and afterwards married M. James Armet, a banker at Besançon, died last year.

David's medallion let into the marble of the tomb both confirms and belies the celebrated portrait drawn by Gavarni. It resembles the latter, and the features are the same under the still abundant locks of hair; but David, unlike Gavarni, reproduced his subject as he saw it; and David was not inclined to exaggerate or flatter. Besides, Gavarni made a sketch of the friend whom he had lost. Only fifty proofs were taken. The present writer saw the one numbered 25, which is the property of General Thiébaud. It agrees perfectly with the medallion; and the two together pass a definite judgment on Madame d'Abrantès. She certainly was not pretty. She was less, and at the same time better. She had mental attractions and ardour, she had the qualities of her defects; fickleness of character, perhaps, but also fire, courage, and dignity.

Dying at fifty-four, she had witnessed and experienced as many events, known as much magnificence, and suffered as many calamities, as if she had survived a century.

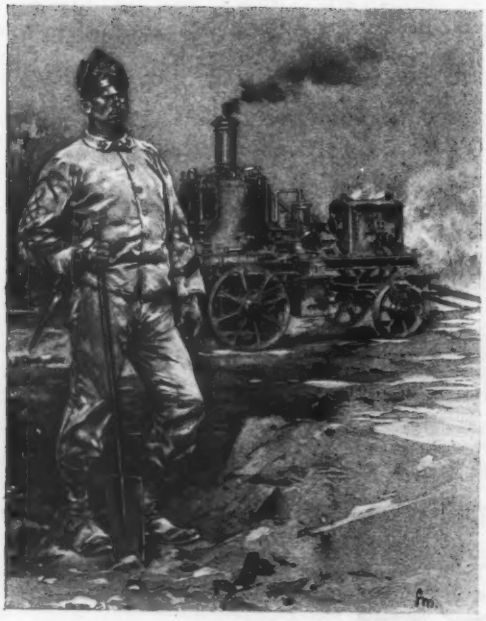
PAUL PERRET.





THE ITALIAN ARMY [*]

ITS PRESENT ORGANIZATION



In time of peace the Italian army is formed in twelve army corps, on a system of division into districts and of distribution of troops analogous to that adopted in France. Nevertheless, whether it be owing to a want of barrack accommodation in the Peninsula, or to the contemplation of a continental war, the corps of Upper Italy have an excess of forces of all arms upon their territory, to the detriment of those of the South.

The standing army comprises 13,559 officers, 15,453 non-commissioned officers, and 215,379 corporals and private soldiers; and the calling out of the reserves would increase the strength of the first line to 871,000 men.

The movable militia, which is analogous to our territorial army, and

(*) See *Art and Letters* for June, vol. II, p. 305.

liable to be incorporated in the troops on active service, would in the event of mobilisation form in the rear. Lastly, in the third line, the territorial militia, which is analogous to the reserve of our territorial army, would group, in 320 battalions of infantry and in sections representing the different services, all those who had been exempted during time of peace and those who had completed their term of service in the active army, the reserve, and the movable militia.

The official documents represent the total force which Italy would be able to put into the field as amounting to 2,570,000 men. This, like all totals derived from departmental returns, would in reality be liable to considerable diminution, but even after deducting nearly 1,000,000 untrained men, and a good number of emigrants and of men just discharged upon half-pay or exempted from service, it would be possible without exaggeration to estimate the belligerent forces of the Italian army at 1,500,000 men.

The law with reference to recruiting at present in force dates from March 11th, 1888; but the general principles upon which it is based were introduced into Italy in 1875, when the personal service of all citizens of from 20 to 39 years of age was rendered obligatory. Every year the young men who are to form the contingent of the standing army and to pass three years in the ranks (four in the cavalry), are chosen by lottery. This contingent, which is known as the contingent of the first category, was some years ago fixed at 82,000 men. The young men available for service who remain over after that total has been exceeded by the number drawn form the second category; subject to some annual convocations, they have to form, together with the old soldiers, the reserve of the active army.

As for those who, owing to constitutional defects or family reasons contemplated by the law, are exempted from service, they are classed in the territorial militia, in which the men who have served in the active army and its reserve for eight years, and in the movable militia for four years, are incorporated.

Every corps receives its recruits from the three regions into which the kingdom is divided—Upper, Central, and Lower Italy. In our day when

it is customary to extol the practice of recruiting by districts in order to simplify the work of recruiting and mobilisation, the time has not yet come for Italy to abandon the system by which she blends contingents from all parts under the same flag; the spirit of provincialism and individuality is not yet sufficiently eradicated, and it will take many years to identify the Neapolitans and the Calabrians with the Piedmontese and the Lombards. It is, therefore, a very wise law which, in order to produce perfect homogeneity, mixes in the same crucible the incongruous elements at its disposal.

The highest point of the military official system is marked by the rank of General of the Army, a title which is enjoyed by only two officers—General Morezzo della Rocca and General Cialdini, Duke of Gaeta —both appointed in 1860. There are sixty lieutenant-generals or divisional generals, from among whom the King appoints the commanders of the army corps. In the grade immediately below this are 105 major-generals. The functions proper to the last mentioned rank may be occasionally discharged by colonels, who receive the title of brigade colonels; the number of these is not definitely fixed and varies according to circumstances, the average being from fifteen to twenty.

In its constitution the staff resembles at once the systems in force in France and Germany. Without entering into the details of its organization, it is sufficient to say that it forms a special corps distinguished by a uniform of its own, and recruited by the military school of Turin from among the lieutenants of the army; subsequently the officers return from that corps to their troop, and later on re-enter the staff, and so on up to the higher ranks, which, to the detriment of their regimental colleagues, they usually attain with a little too much rapidity. The general staff known as "the command of the staff," is, as in Germany, absolutely distinct from the War Office, but owing to the lack of continuity of service on the part of its officers, it does not seem, like the great staff of Berlin, to constitute a real school destined to insure unity of views and doctrines in the *personnel* called upon to second the commanders of the great sections of the army.

The staff corps at present comprises 21 colonels, 72 superior officers, lieutenant-colonels, or majors, and 72 captains.

It is not uncommon to hear reformers maintain that distinctions between the troops of the same army are only the results of prejudice, and that the value of a soldier has nothing to do with the cut of his uniform or the colour of his lace. Napoleon I., whose judgment in military matters is worthy of some consideration, was of an opinion diametrically opposed to this. The Italians seem to have remained faithful to the principles which the first king of Italy enunciated on the subject.

In the infantry we find the Alpines, the *bersaglieri,* the grenadiers, and the regiments of the line distinguished, the first by absolutely characteristic uniforms, the others by less marked but nevertheless noticeable differences.

Since 1872 the Italian military authorities have recognized that in order to carry on war in mountainous districts it is necessary to have specially instructed troops, trained in times of peace to manœuvre in localities which have nothing in common with the uniform level of the drill ground. Fifteen Alpine companies were first organized; then their number was augmented to 36 in 1878, to 72 in 1882, and finally to 75 in 1887. The Alpines at present form 7 regiments or 22 active battalions recruited exclusively in the mountainous cantons and representing an effective force of 487 officers and 9500 troopers. The men composing them are, during the whole period of their military service, attached to the Alpine troops; after being eight years in the active army and the reserve, they pass into the companies of the movable militia, and complete their last seven years in the Alpine companies of the territorial militia.

It is a rough, unostentatious troop, for which there are no pleasant garrisons. From the end of April until October the Alpines disappear to bury themselves in the mountains. To traverse almost impassable roads, and then to make the burdened mules traverse them too, to open up a route across the snow and the rocks, to be as familiar as a smuggler with all the winding ways and goat tracks by which they could ferret out

the enemy, or storm its position from the rear or flank, that is a kind of instruction which the public, greedy of reviews and military displays, appreciates less than correct marches to the strains of bands of music; but from the military point of view, the part played by the Alpines is the essential basis of the protection of the frontier, as well as of the security of the armies concentrated in the rear.

More brilliant, and above all better known, are the *bersaglieri,* the spoiled children of the Italian people. The *bersagliere* makes a marked impression upon the mind even of the tourist who regards military matters with the greatest indifference. That black troop which passes, alert and eager, to a quick step given by the shrill note of the clarion, and bristles with dark plumes which flutter in the wind, attracts the attention of every eye, and the crowd stands back and looks with complacency and even with tenderness upon those little soldiers who march so erect beneath their broad hats.

Esprit de corps is carried to the last degree in their twelve regiments. When in 1887 the African expeditionary corps embarked at Naples, and every one without distinction had to give up the ordinary uniform to assume in its place a costume of buff-coloured cloth more appropriate to the climate of the shores of the Red Sea, the *bersaglieri* were allowed to retain their plume of cock's feathers to adapt to their Stanley helmets, and proud of seeing themselves thus distinguished from other battalions, they swept impetuously on amid frenzied shouts of *evviva* from the population, until they reached the arsenal and the embarking stage. When an officer or non-commissioned officer has served in the *bersaglieri,* and exchange renders it necessary for him to assume another uniform, he never fails to refer to the fact in the course of conversation; the interlocutor may smile, but he cannot misconstrue the significance of this detail. There are churlish and sceptical natures to whom this will seem affectation, "posing" as it is called, but is it not necessary to recognize that that which makes the superiority of a soldier is above all the conviction that he possesses that superiority? If a soldier is proud, even to vanity, of the tradition of the corps to which he belongs, he may be unhesita-



tingly relied upon. Now the *bersaglieri* have their tradition; it is not very old, and only dates from the year 1836, when Alexander de La Marmora proposed to King Charles Albert the institution of a number of independent companies called *bersaglieri* to be the kernel of the battalions and later on of the regiments; but since 1848 the history of that corps presents a series of deeds of arms which may justly exalt the spirit of a troop.

The twelve regiments, formed in three battalions, at present constitute an effective force during time of peace of 780 officers and 15,200 men. Since 1887 has been created the office of inspector-general of the *bersaglieri*. The duty of the general officer upon whom the title is conferred is to insure unity in the methods of instruction and the constant improvement of the qualities for which this corps is distinguished.

The origin of the grenadiers, which are at the present time formed into a brigade of two regiments, dates back much farther; created in 1659 under the name of the regiment of the Guards, they can point in their annals to the battles of Staffarde, of Marsaglia, and of L'Assiette. In the grenadier regiments tall recruits are preferred upon principle. The uniform is distinguished from that of the line by the red collar and facings and the white scutcheons.

In the infantry of the line, which at the present time numbers ninety-four regiments of three battalions each, the ten first date from the seventeenth century, and the following eight were created in 1821. All those of which the distinguishing number is above eighteen were successively organized from 1859 downwards. The last augmentation took place in 1882, when the number of the regiments was increased from seventy-six to ninety-four. All the infantry troops are armed with the Wetterli rifle, altered in 1887 on Captain Vitali's system to a quick-loading weapon with a calibre of 10 millimetres 35.

The infantry company is normally formed in four platoons; its effective force in time of peace varies from 90 to 98 rifles, a number which can be increased to 225 in time of war. It is the same with the company of the engineers. The captains throughout the army are now seconded, in each company, by three officers, a lieutenant and two sub-lieutenants.

With regard to the non-commissioned officers, the quartermaster-major

corresponds to our adjutant, the quartermaster to our sergeant-major. The sections are commanded by sergeants, or corporal-majors, the intermediate rank between that of non-commissioned officer and that of corporal, of which there is no equivalent in the French army.

The lieutenant-colonel has the command of one of the three battalions in the infantry regiment. The administration of the corps falls to the lot of a superior officer, without command of a troop, who is designated by the title adjutant-major. Under each commander of a battalion the duties of adjutant-major are discharged by a lieutenant, and, lastly, an adjutant-major-in-chief of the rank of captain centralizes the service of order and discipline for the regiment.

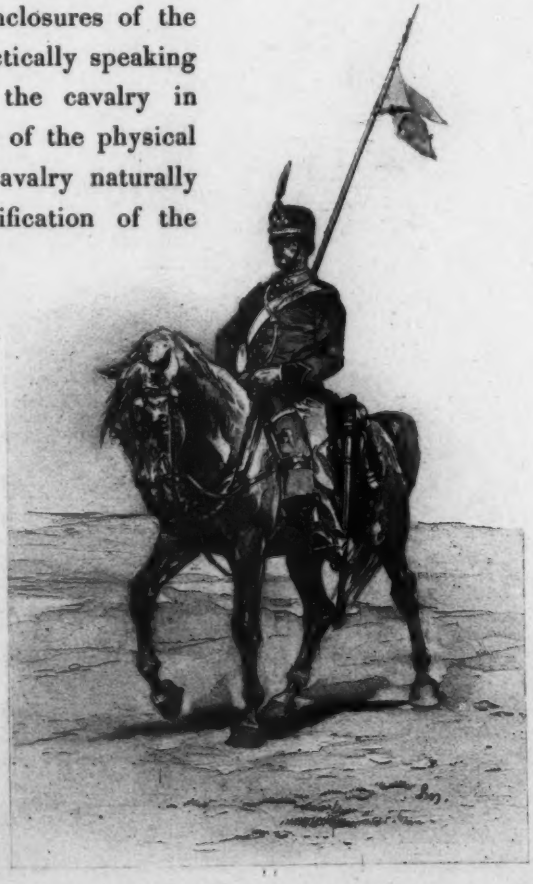


The Italians have only two kinds of cavalry—the Lancers and the light-horse. Out of respect to tradition the four first regiments of the Lancers have preserved the helmet with the plain curved crest, whilst the six others have the same head-covering as the light-horse —the talpack, surmounted by an eagle's plume. The ten regiments of the Lancers are armed with lance, carbine, and sabre, the fourteen regiments of light-horse have only the carbine and the sabre. Independently of the distinctions that we have just mentioned in respect of the weapons and headgear, and the colour of the collar and facings of the tunic or *giubba,* the colour of the stripes of the trousers differs in each corps. The twenty-four regiments are more often

distinguished by their names than by their numbers. These names, when they refer to towns, have no relation to the garrison or the raising of the contingent.

The six squadrons of the cavalry regiment ought, according to the departmental returns, to range in number from 125 to 135 men in time of peace as well as in time of war. Their internal subdivision is identical with that of the infantry company, and its grades are known by the same names as in the infantry troops.

Among all the sites of military operations recorded in history there are few so unfavourable to cavalry evolutions as Upper Italy. The inextricable net-work of canals for the purposes of irrigation which developes itself between the water-courses, the hedges and enclosures of the rice plantations, etc., reduced, practically speaking to nothing, the part played by the cavalry in the campaign of 1859. By reason of the physical constitution of the country the cavalry naturally continued reduced, until the unification of the kingdom, to very small proportions. The origin of the oldest cavalry regiment dates from the creation of the Yellow Dragoons in 1690; the others, in default of identity of name, can glory in the deeds of arms of their predecessors in the army which served in Spain, in the Russian campaign, and in the operations of 1813 and 1814.



In spite of these traditions, too generally overlooked at the present day, the Italian cavalry cannot yet be considered as other than a force in process

of formation. The four years passed in the ranks are not sufficient to inculcate the secrets of equitation to conscripts who, with rare exceptions, have never had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the conduct or care of horses before entering the service.

Besides, until 1879 the supply of horses was far from sufficient to meet the requirements of the army. The two breeding depôts created in 1870 at Grossetto and at Persano could not maintain more than 1,500 young horses, and the purchases from abroad were only with great difficulty made sufficient for mounting the cavalry and drawing the guns or waggons.

Thanks to the activity of the inspector of the horse supplies, Colonel Doux, who entered upon his functions in 1879, the annual resources of the depôts (successively increased to the number of six) now amount to more than 3,000 horses; besides this, the understanding arrived at in 1887 between the departments of War and Agriculture with reference to the formation of a council to deal with all matters relating to horses, cannot fail to promote the breeding of that animal, and, at the same time, to insure a sufficient supply to meet the requirements of the army. These efforts, judiciously directed, are sure to meet with success by reason of the qualities already manifested by the Italian breeds of horses, from the point of view of military service. The horses of Maremma, of Sardinia, and of the Roman Campagna, reared as a rule in the open air without stable or shelter by day or by night, acquire a hardiness peculiar to themselves; they constitute a valuable type known in Italy under the characteristic name of "soldier-horse" (*cavallo-soldato*). The crossing of these breeds with the half-blood Arab has already been productive of good results, and at the same time the taste for sport and fox-hunting is developing itself among the officers and the youth of the aristocracy.

On leaving the school at Modena the cavalry officers all proceed to the school at Pignerol, where they pass one year. In the course of their career they return there as our lieutenants go to Saumur to pass through their course of instruction; and there is also this analogy between the French and Italian schools, that the non-commissioned officers cannot be promoted to the rank of sub-lieutenant unless they have also passed a

year at Pignerol. The institution of the normal school of cavalry dates from the year 1849; its predecessor, the Piedmontese school of equitation, established in 1823, was stationed at Veneria Reale.

The carefully selected force of the Royal Carbineers, although it includes some infantry, is attached to the cavalry. For the purposes of public order and of the operations connected with recruiting and mobilisation, the carbineers, who are formed in eleven legions, discharge the same functions as the *gendarmerie* in France. In the event of war they have also to furnish escorts for the head-quarters. Their tradition is outside the domain of the history of warfare, but they nevertheless enjoy a most honourable record by reason of the bravery with which their repression of brigandage on the borders and in Lower Italy was characterized.

The total force of the 11 legions of carbineers and of the legion of cadets stationed in Rome amounts to 623 officers, 24,000 men, and 3,750 horses.

It is from the carbineers that the squadron of cuirassiers which forms the King's guard of honour is recruited.

Of all the elements in the Italian army that of which the development has been the most rapid and complete is undoubtedly the artillery. In 1859 there were only two regiments of fifteen batteries each, in addition to two horse batteries. In 1873 the field artillery comprised eight, and in 1882, twelve, regiments. Indeed, by reason of the division effected in 1887 there are at present twenty-four regiments of mounted artillery with eight batteries each, that is to say, a brigade for each army corps; in addition to this six horse batteries are grouped in a distinct regiment, and a regiment of mountain artillery distributes its nine batteries between the Alpine troops. The artillery of the forts, again, consists of five regiments, two of which are specially told off for coast defence. The guns, which are of the Krupp pattern, are of two calibres, one of 75 millimetres, for the horse batteries; the other of 87 millimetres for the batteries known as "nine-pounder batteries;" their proportion for each army corps has reached the number of 96, which represents 1,296 pieces of ordnance for the troops of the first line.

The tactical unit is the group called *brigata,* which is composed of two or three batteries; the batteries are capable of division into three sections, each with two guns, commanded by subalterns. As at present constituted they all possess six guns, but they vary as regards the number of their men as follows : 90 men and 45 horses for a mounted battery; 120 men and 85 horses for a horse battery, and 120 men and 55 mules for a mountain battery.

The equipment train has no longer any existence, all the services which belonged to it being attached to the artillery regiments, each of which includes, in addition to its batteries, one equipment company in the divisional regiments, or two in the regiments attached to the army corps; the soldiers of these companies have the same uniform as the drivers or the gunners.

The artillery seems to have been the object of peculiar care on the part of the government, and it is only necessary to see it manœuvre at Turin, at Bologna, or in some other great garrison, to be convinced that it does honour to this predilection. The Italian breeds of horses furnish it, besides, with good teams; better adapted to draught than to the saddle, these heavily-built horses sturdily draw both guns and waggons, and the staff of officers, selected with special care at the military academy and at the *scuola d'applicazione* at Turin, embraces without question the best elements of the army.

Silently, the Italian engineers have in ten years completed works of considerable magnitude, of which the national budget alone has, up to the present time, experienced the effects. From the Mont Cenis to the Col d'Altare, the forts, the redoubts, the batteries, extend in echelons from place to place; in order to render Rome "intangible," to use the expression of Victor Emmanuel, the holy city has been converted into a great entrenched camp, and the straits of Bonifacio, like those of Messina, bristle with defence works.

The work of the engineers, moreover, is not limited to these great military constructions. In the engineers are incorporated the railway companies, the telegraphists, the aëronauts, and the "specialists," a kind



of permanent commission with a subordinate *personnel* charged with studying and experimenting on the application to military purposes of the latest scientific discoveries. Among the branches of this department must also be included the carrier-pigeon service, which has given very satisfactory results since the besieging manœuvres under Verona, and in the Massowah expedition.

Lastly, the pontonnier regiment is attached to the engineers, as well as the two special companies at Venice, known as the *lagunieri,* whose duty it is to provide for the carrying out between the "floating city," the *lidi,* and the mainland of all the communications relating to the military service. Unequally divided between the four regiments, the various departments of the engineers consist altogether of sixty-eight companies, with a total effective force of about 5,600 men.

In time of peace one cannot express an opinion upon the administration of an army, for between the recriminations of the discontented and the panegyrics of the interested it is very difficult to arrive at the truth. We have seen the responsibility for the reverses of 1849 and 1866 thrown at once upon the commissariat department and upon the staff. The defects of that time have undoubtedly been remedied, and it may be boldly asserted that at the time of the grand manœuvres as well as in the case of the transports of supplies for Africa, the administrative services have given no cause for disappointment.

As for the ambulance department, it has at its disposal a *matériel* as perfect as those of the first armies of Europe, and in the Massowah expedition, it must be acknowledged that the percentage of men in hospital never attained abnormal proportions, considering the severity of the climate, in regions known to the Arabs by the name of "the furnace."

The law relating to the organization of the army accords to the functionaries of all these services, the military commissariat, the corps of official accountants, and the ambulance corps, a complete assimilation to the officers of the army; in this respect it is diametrically opposed to the German system so eagerly copied in other respects. The medical staff, for example, has at its head the rank of surgeon-major-general; the official accountants have an accountant-colonel, etc. The military druggists alone have not yet

obtained this complete assimilation. The *personnel* of these various services is made up of twelve ambulance companies and twelve provision companies, in the proportion of one to each army corps.

Lastly, it is necessary to mention the seven discipline companies, the three companies of prisoners, and the five companies of convicts, the company of artillery veterans stationed at Turin, the five companies of artisans, and the pensioners.

The kingdom of Sardinia and the kingdom of the Two Sicilies each possessed their hospital for pensioners, the first at Asti, the second at Naples. Since the unification of Italy the pensioners' corps has been formed into four companies, principally located at Naples; its numbers, which naturally vary, average 24 officers and 440 men. The internal accommodation of the hospital at Naples is modest; but the beautiful climate makes up for the magnificence of the palace erected in Paris by Louis XIV, and, as on the side-walks of our Esplanade, one may see along the whole length of the smiling "Riviera," the gallant old men, many of whom wear the medals commemorative of our common campaigns, leaning on their sticks, or slowly walking up and down as they chat of by-gone days.

Such, in its entirety, is the present state of the standing army in Italy. It is always necessary, in a country which has other than military aspirations, and the economical conditions of which forbid the prolonged maintenance of considerable forces in the ranks, to inculcate and to keep alive a kind of military spirit among its people. In the year 1835 King Charles Albert organized the National Rifle Association, the object of which was to encourage target-shooting among the National Guards and the men on furlough; this institution was abandoned by degrees, but received a new impulse in 1882. The State took the initiative, and encouraged, by a subsidy of three-fifths of the expense, the establishment in all the provinces of a shooting ground, in which, on Sundays, aided by an annual tax of three francs, young men above sixteen years of age, and the men of the reserve and the militia meet for practice. Each society disposes of a number of Wetterli rifles and of sufficient ammunition for

the practice meetings to allow each member to use six cartridges under the conditions laid down for the firing practice of the regular soldier, and to perform certain military exercises under arms.

The members of the rifle societies, to whom the law accords dispensations from convocation when classes of the reserve and militia are called out, are known by a hat resembling that of the Alpines.

Like other institutions which, while remaining quite optional, seem to carry with them certain liabilities, the National Rifle Association had at first to contend against deep-rooted distrust and inertia on the part of the people; but little by little the repeated calling out of classes of the reserve and the exemptions granted to the members of the association attracted a larger number of adherents. Under the impulse given to it by the Central Directory, which was established in Rome in 1888, the speedy prosperity of an institution so praiseworthy as this, which aims at preparing the youth of the country for military service and maintaining the practice of arms among all the men included in the military forces of the kingdom, may be safely anticipated.

With the same view, and in order to develope early in children the physical and moral qualities which make "a gallant soldier," the State has exerted itself to collect the sons of military or civilian families in the military colleges, which in future will thus be able to play the part of a nursery for officers. The military colleges are five in number; they are established at Florence, Milan, Naples, Rome, and Messina, and have an annual total of 266 vacancies to be filled up.

Independently of these colleges, in which the instruction aims at preparing the pupils for the military schools, an attempt has been made during the last few years to introduce into the universities, as into the primary schools, a mixed system of education, in which military exercises would play a considerable part.

As might be anticipated, however, the promotion of these new measures has been hindered by the opposition of certain members of parliament; moreover, they would appear to be a little excessive and precipitate, for, while admitting that discipline and military methods are the best system of education with a view to inculcating manliness and respect for all

authority in the youth of a country, the fact must be recognized that the institution of the National Association would appear to be amply sufficient to keep up the drill and rifle practice of the population. The transformation of the college boys into little soldiers would only be a result of the passionate enthusiasm with which the Latin races adopt, even to exaggeration, every new idea.

The dress of the Italian army is remarkable for the uniformity of its cut and its colours. Apart from the staff, the carbineers, the *bersaglieri,* the artillery, and the engineers, who wear dark blue trousers, all the troops have iron-grey trousers. The carbineers alone have coats with flaps; the article of clothing which is the same for every rank throughout the whole army is the *giubba* or tunic, with one row of buttons for the rank and file and two for the officers.

Instead of the epaulette which is characteristic of the officer, the non-commissioned officers and soldiers have a shoulder-piece, the enlargement of which above the seam of the sleeve recalls the bourrelet formerly worn. The officers, from the rank of sub-lieutenant to that of colonel, wear the same type of epaulette with a bullion and heavy fringe.

The uniform of a general officer, while of the same general character as that of the other officers, does not include epaulettes; heavy silver aiguillettes cover the plastron; the collar, the shoulders, and the facings are ornamented with silver lace, the head-covering is a helmet, peculiar rather than handsome, of black fur surmounted by a metallic crest and an enormous white plume of feathers, above which again rises a white tuft; on each of the trousers are two silver stripes.

On the sleeves the distinguishing badges of the different ranks are as apparent as they are easy to recognize. For officers of every grade the stripes are similarly shaped, and whatever their number may be, they consist only of a simple Hungarian knot of silver or gold for the officers, and of red worsted for the non-commissioned officers; this Hungarian knot is the characteristic by which the commissioned are distinguished from the non-commissioned officers; the stripes edging the facings and indicating the rank of the wearer are the same for both categories.

The stripes of the corporal major and the corporal are entirely of red worsted.

When in full uniform officers of all arms wear the distinguishing head-gear of their branch of the service; the shako, which is known as the *kepi* by the Italians, is worn by the staff, the infantry, the artillery, the engineers, and the auxiliary forces; the hat by the Alpines and the *bersaglieri;* the helmet by the four first cavalry regiments, and the talpack by the other twenty. All, without distinction, wear, when in undress uniform, a soft cap with a very curved peak; the stripes upon the cap reproduce the distinctive marks of the wearer's rank.

The only undress head-covering for the troopers is the forage-cap with a peak, except for the *bersaglieri,* who wear a red fez with a blue tassel. At the manœuvres and during drill, the full dress helmet is, in the case of the officers as well as of the rank and file, protected by a white covering.

The officers' service badge is a blue scarf worn cross-wise; an embroidered star in the centre of the upper loop of the Hungarian knot distinguishes the orderly officers.

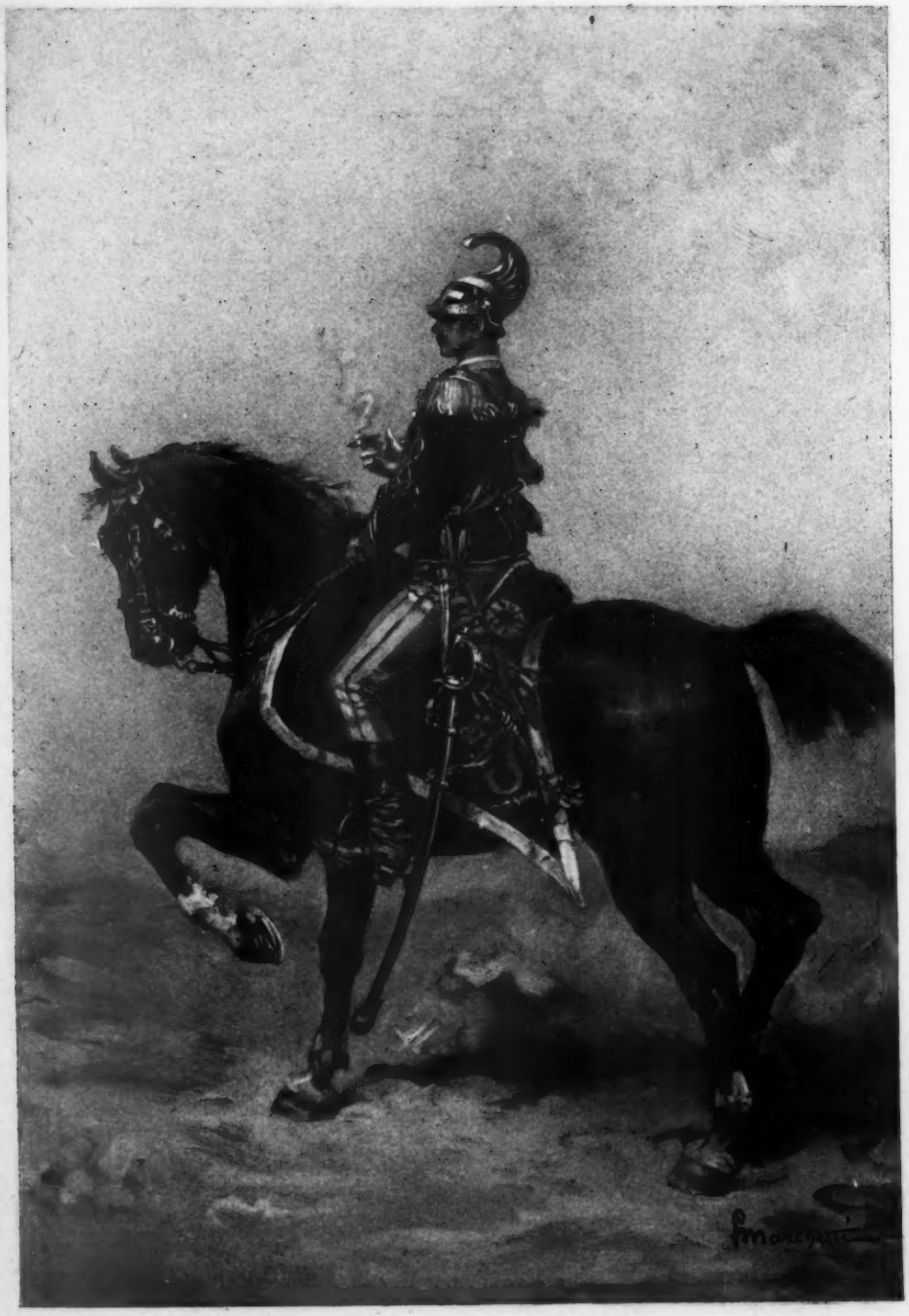
Although decorations are but seldom worn with the every-day uniform, they are very widely distributed throughout the army. All the orders which exist at the present day were founded by the House of Savoy, which has not considered it desirable to revive the Order of the Iron Crown instituted by Napoleon I. on June 5th, 1805, and which, by its orange riband striped with green, subsequently to 1805 displayed and maintained the Italian colours, even under Austrian domination. In all the portraits of Napoleon I. painted after 1805, that order only, together with the Legion of Honour, figures on his breast. It acquired a well-deserved renown from 1805 to 1815, and under the first king of Italy was only given as a reward of merit.

As regards the orders instituted by the House of Savoy the army could make no pretention to the Order of the Annunciade founded in 1362 by Amedeus VI., Count of Savoy, which was rather an order of fraternity than of military association, and is reserved at the present day for princes and the leading parliamentary ministers.

The order of the Saints Maurice and Lazarus which was founded or restored by Duke Emmanuel Philibert (1572) is not exclusively military; in the terms of the primitive statutes, the uniform principle of which was preserved at the moment of the reorganization, in 1868, its object is to reward all services rendered to the country. At the present day it embraces five classes :—knight-grand-cross, grand-officer, commander, officer, and knight. The badge of the order since 1572 is a white "cross pommée" edged with gold, bearing in the angles the cross of S. Lazarus which is green, surmounted by a royal crown and attached to a green riband. It gives the right to military honours, but does not carry a pension with it. It is generally decreed in the army in recognition of long service, or as a reward for exceptional services, inventions, and scientific labours.

With the object of preserving this order from the indifference which always results from the existence of a profusion of decorations, Victor Emmanuel instituted the order of the Crown of Italy in 1868. This order carries with it the same privileges, and is divided into the same classes as the order of the Saints Maurice and Lazarus. The decoration of the Crown of Italy consists of a gold "cross pattée," rounded, enamelled in white, cantoned in four love-knots charged in the centre with two scutcheons, *or*, one with an Iron Crown, *or*, the other with the spread eagle, having the cross of Savoy upon its breast. The cross is suspended by a red riband with a white stripe. Neither of these orders can be obtained by non-commissioned officers or the rank and file.

The military order which is exclusively conferred for distinction in active service is the order of Savoy, created by Victor Emmanuel I. in 1815. It had fallen into oblivion during the peace which followed on the Napoleonic period, but was reinstated in 1855 at the time of the campaign in the Crimea, and was then entirely reconstituted. The cross is of gold, enamelled in white, having in the centre the monogram V. E. *or*, on a background of gules. It is placed in a wreath of oak and laurel, and suspended from a military trophy. It is worn attached to a blue riband traversed by a red line. A foreigner can only receive this decoration for military achievements performed in the service of Italy. The military



order of Savoy gives the right to an annual grant of 250 francs to the knights, 400 to the officers, 800 to commanders, 1,500 to grand officers, and 2,000 to knights-grand-cross.

Military services are also rewarded by the medal for military valour—*al valor militare*. In the year 1793 this mark of distinction, which is as accessible to the private soldier as to the general, was instituted by King Victor Amedeus III. Abandoned subsequently like the military order of Savoy, the medal *al valor militare* was in 1833 the subject of a detailed decree promulgated by Charles Albert; the medal is of gold, silver, or bronze; on one side it bears the cross of Savoy surmounted by a crown, and on the other the name of the person upon whom it was conferred and the date when the deed for which it was decreed was performed. The riband is of sky blue. The gold medal carries with it an annual pension of 200 francs, the silver a pension of 100 francs, and the bronze a gratuity of 50 francs.

Independently of these decorations there exists a certain number of commemorative medals, the medal of the campaigns of Independence, instituted in 1865, the medal commemorative of Italian unity, instituted in 1883, and given to soldiers of all ranks who had taken part in one of the campaigns from 1868 to 1870, the medal of the One Thousand, decreed in 1860 by the municipality of Palermo to the volunteers who had disembarked at Marsala with Garibaldi.

The colours of the Italian flag—green, white, and red—resemble those of the French flag in their mode of arrangement. In the centre, on the band of white, stand out the Savoy Arms, gules, with the cross, *argent*, with azure border, surmounted by the royal crown.

The three colours of the Italian flag, green, white, and red, are the direct and legitimate offspring of the three French colours. It is, indeed, said that in 1794 the revolted patriots of Bologna hoisted as their rallying sign the colours of the municipal banner, white and red, adding to them the symbol of hope—green. Others, again, pretend to trace their origin to Dante, and assert that it was in these colours that Beatrice appeared to the poet.

The historical truth is more simple; adopted by the Italian patriots,

in imitation of the French flag, on the entry of the French into Italy, the green, white, and red standard, formed of three bands parallel with the flag-staff, made its first official appearance at the time of the Fête of the Federation, at Milan on July 9th, 1797, and was, as the national flag of the Cisalpine Republic, solemnly blessed by Archbishop Visconti.

Later, in 1802, the disposition of the colours was modified; in a red square was incribed a white lozenge, containing another square with a green ground. On that green ground were displayed, until 1805, the arms of the Italian Republic—a pair of scales, together with a palm and a sword; and subsequently to 1805, the arms of the kingdom of Italy—the eagle with its head turned to the left, and bearing on its heart the Iron Crown upon a round escutcheon. The head of the eagle is surmounted by a shining star on which is the letter N. The mantling surmounted by the crown is white, red, and green. The sceptre and hand of justice are replaced by two halberds. Certain corps, like the Royal Italian Guard, have been permitted to have flags of other colours. In the arsenal at Vienna there is a square standard of a dark red colour, charged with a silver N, surmounted by the Iron Crown and surrounded with horns having a grenade in the centre; but the knot of this flag is green, white, and red. The three Italian colours unquestionably come from France and from Napoleon.

On March 25th, 1848, Charles Albert, abandoning the Piedmontese flag —blue bearing in the centre the shield of the House of Savoy—restored the national flag to the troops, and ordered that it should only be unfurled in Lombardy. The same flag was, on the following 15th of April, given to the navy and the mercantile marine, and two months later it definitely replaced the blue flag throughout the whole of the kingdom of Sardinia, the tricolour cockade being at the same time substituted for the blue cockade.

The flag now carried by the army was distributed to it on June 2, 1861, by King Victor Emmanuel.

Since 1871 the infantry corps alone carry the flag. The inscriptions commemorative of the campaigns or of the origin of the regiment are engraved on the cartouch of the flag-staff. For the old Piedmontese regi-

ments such as those of the Sardinian and Coni brigades, the first name inscribed is that of Staffarde.

The flag of a regiment may be decorated with the military order of Savoy, or with the medal for military valour.

The law with reference to the pay of the army established in Italy a system of progressive remuneration after six years passed in the same rank, for all officers whose annual pay does not exceed 7,000 francs. The innovation recently introduced into France, had, therefore, been for more than ten years in force in the Italian army; this periodical increase is fixed at a tenth of the pay. From the following table it will be seen that the minimum pay is 15,000 francs for a general of the army; 12,000 for a lieutenant-general; 9,000 for a major-general; 7,000 for a colonel; 5,200 for a lieutenant-colonel; 4,400 for a major; 3,200 for a captain; 2,200 for a lieutenant; 1,800 for a sub-lieutenant; the royal carbineers receive supplementary pay ranging from 500 francs for a sub-lieutenant to 2,200 for a colonel. In the cavalry, the artillery, and the engineers, the colonels have an additional 400 francs, the lieutenant-colonels, the majors, and the captains 300 francs, and the lieutenants and the sub-lieutenants 200 francs.

In the case of the inferior officers there is added to this rather modest pay an allowance for the keep of a horse, varying from 400 to 280 francs according to the branch of the service; supplements are also assigned to certain offices in the special services, and to directorships, schools, and other military establishments.

A real boon conferred upon the officers by the State is the right of travelling on railways at reduced fares, which for themselves amount to about one fourth, and for the members of their families to one-half of the ordinary tariff. The daily pay of an infantry soldier reaches 98 centimes, a soldier of the first class receives 1 franc 3 centimes, a corporal 1 franc 13 centimes, a corporal-major 1 franc 33 centimes, a sergeant 2 francs 1 centime, a quartermaster 2 francs 31 centimes, and a quartermaster-major 2 francs 91 centimes. In the Alpine troops this pay is increased by five centimes, and by ten in the cavalry, artillery, and engineers.

Besides, from the point of view of the provision made for him, the Italian soldier generally finds himself better fed and better clad in his regiment than at home; for young men whose physical development has taken place more under the influence of life in the open air than by reason of the nutritious qualities of *paste* and *polenta,* the food supplied at the barracks constitutes a far more substantial diet. The daily rations consist of 750 grammes of bread, or 560 grammes of biscuit, and 220 grammes of meat; it includes also 240 grammes of farinaceous food, 20 grammes of lard, and 20 grammes of salt. Rations of sugar, coffee, and wine are allowed at the rate of 300 a year in each corps. The cost of the complete ration is fixed in Italy at 60 1/2 centimes.

As for the barracks, they are almost all alike; they are abandoned convents, the interior arrangement of which has undergone more or less modification. To visitors the dormitories appear more commodious than in France, owing to the fact that the beds fold up, and are placed in the day-time against the wall. Little by little the progress of hygiene is made apparent by the introduction of the latest improvements, which render it easy for the soldier to pay that attention to his person which was for too long a time considered superfluous, no less in Italy than in the neighbouring countries. The cloisters preserved in a great number of barracks are usefully employed for the mustering of troops on wet days. Lastly, the internal order of the barracks is assured by a picket placed under the command of a lieutenant or sub-lieutenant permanently resident in quarters.

In all the classes and in all the services that we have just enumerated are to be found the same traits characteristic of the two categories which constitute the army,—the officers for the one part, and the troop for the other. The officer, elegant and correct in his attire, generally discharges the duties of his profession with eagerness; he is forbidden to wear the dress of a civilian, and the wearing of the sword is obligatory. These regulations, rigorously observed, cannot fail to help in giving him that *désinvolture* and easy bearing which are his distinguishing characteristics. One can see that he is proud of his uniform, and that he wishes to



take in Italian society the place occupied to-day by the German officer in German society. If the means afforded to him by the State of acquiring this honourable position, are, as in other Latin countries, small in proportion to the pecuniary requirements of the time, it is by education, good manners, and unblemished honour, and perhaps by the attainment of his longed-for laurels, that he counts on reaching the topmost rung in the social ladder of his country. In this regard one can have nothing but praise for the Italian officers for imitating their present allies, and it must be admitted that the tests imposed on all young men aspiring to commissions are judiciously combined with a view to justify this noble ambition. In fact the programme of instruction in the military colleges begins with the significant principle—"It is necessary that every pupil should become a well-bred man and a brave citizen." And it is with a kindred idea that the instruction at Modena and Turin is pursued until the moment when the young sub-lieutenant is invested with authority. This moral and intellectual culture, to which the Italian character lends itself in a peculiar degree, cannot fail to be a counter-agent to the excessive imitation of German manners and customs which prevails. This imitation shows itself more particularly in the new generation of officers. It does, indeed, appear somewhat strange; and without introducing any question of a diplomatic or political character, it is surely permissible to ask what Italian elegance can find to profit by in borrowing the stiffness which is so much esteemed at Potsdam. Since the successes achieved by the arms of the Emperor William, the greater part of the military powers have exhibited a kind of mania for copying the conquerors of 1866 and 1870 even to the point of emulating them.

Races do not alter, and from our knowledge of the Italians it is impossible to imagine the Prussian corporal system applied to a nation the first qualities of which are vivacity and intellectual refinement. The troops of Teulié and Pino were indeed Italians and nothing but Italians, just as, later on, were those of La Marmora and Cialdini; and it is precisely on account of their own character, their warmth, and their enthusiasm that they won their laurels. A good number of officers in the wars of Independence can still bear testimony to the truth of what we have said upon

this point; several of them actually hold important commands in the army, and it is in them above all that one finds the sympathetic natural type of the Italian soldier—light-hearted, open, and full of life and go.

With the tendency of the Latin races to carry all they undertake to extremes, it was only necessary to assert that the disasters of 1849 and 1866 were due to the insufficient instruction of the leaders of the army, to create a current of new ideas in Italy; from that date it has been laid down as a principle that scientific attainments are necessary in every grade of the military official system, and constitute the first quality requisite in an officer; examinations are perpetual until the end of an officer's career, and priority over the sword has been accorded to the pen. There has naturally resulted from this state of things a certain degree of uneasiness in the corps of officers, where advancement unequally distributed pushes members of the military school to the higher ranks, and retains in obscure positions officers whose merit, demonstrated on the battle-field, cannot prevail over official diplomas, and whose horizon is thus inevitably limited to the perspective of a retiring pension.

The general and superior officers have the right to retire on a pension after thirty years of service, the subalterns after twenty-five, and the troopers after twenty. The pension cannot be less than 150 francs or more than 7,000 francs.

The individual worth of troops, as has been very often remarked, depends more upon example than upon high qualities of generalship. It is in fact the subordinate officer who, by constant contact with the soldier, is really able to smarten up, to form, and when the day arrives, to animate and lead him. All the military powers have, for several years since, been occupied in compensating for the introduction of short service in the ranks by the amelioration of the inferior grades of officers. The object is to retain the non-commissioned officers in the regiment, in order to make professional soldiers of them, such as the armies of former times had by thousands.

In Italy there is special accommodation for the non-commissioned officers in barracks, and their life is thus rendered as agreeable as possible; their mess, which is most comfortably arranged, provides them with a separate

common-room and a very well-served table; isolated from the places occupied by the troops, it constitutes a kind of club where at meal times and in their leisure hours, the non-commissioned officers can, without leaving their quarters, amuse themselves and throw off the constraint which the presence of inferiors imposes upon every rank. Their distinctive badges have been multiplied upon their uniforms, and are to be seen on the *kepi*, the collar, and the sleeves. In short, the law of 1833 guarantees to them after twelve years of uninterrupted service in the ranks, some kind of civil employment in the State departments or on the railways, and their livelihood is also assured until their attainment of the place which is reserved for them. A considerable increase in the number of re-enlistments has been proved to have taken place since the promulgation of this law, and the quartermasters and sergeants, particularly in the artillery, now present a very noteworthy proportion of vigorous and experienced non-commissioned officers.

The soldier is generally disciplined and obedient; if he still leaves something to be desired from the point of view of horsemanship, he nevertheless marches well, and knows how to wield the pick and shovel, which is no mean quality on account of the more and more extended use of fortifications upon the field of battle.

His natural sobriety and his high spirits enable him to accommodate himself easily to the privations to which circumstances may expose him. The newspapers have often reproduced private letters written from Massowah by soldiers of the rank and file, expressing in a touching manner the surprise experienced by them at the aspect of that burning and desolate region and at the same time a sentiment of pride, of contentment, and of noble confidence. In the evening some country *canzonetta,* or some improvised theatrical performance cheered up the spirits which were depressed by the relentless heat of the day, and gay and confident good humour revived again.

The *mal du pays,* the home-sickness, or *heimweh* of the northern races which casts down and overwhelms the strongest, finds no germ in that southern temperament which the sun and the blue sky have endowed with generous and exuberant vigour. A few years ago it would have been pos-

sible to cite instances of insubordination of a sufficiently grave character, as well as cases of desertion; but it is to be observed that the culprits belonged almost exclusively to the contingents of the South, still imperfectly assimilated to the national army.

Such in its entirety is the Italian army. At the present moment it is more than ever desirable that it should be represented without disparagement and without flattery; for if certain events have a tendency to modify the expression of former sympathies by a French pen, they cannot do away with history. For a century since it shows France and Italy constantly associated almost under the same flag, for the defence of the same causes and the triumph of the same principles. There is thus constituted a bond which politics cannot destroy: the treaties between sovereigns are signed in ink; but the compacts between peoples are sealed with blood.

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THE CENTENNIAL FINE ART EXHIBITION

IN THE CHAMP DE MARS(*)



Of all the pictures in the Centennial Exhibition, David's "Coronation of Napoleon" makes the most lively and lasting impression on the visitor. Did the functions of the Fine Art Jury embrace the assignment of honours to deceased artists, I cannot but think that this great composition would bear away the palm from all its competitors, and that notwithstanding the presence by its side in the balcony round the dome of such well-known and important works as Ingres' "Saint Symphorien," Delacroix' "Battle of Poitiers" and "The Barricade," Gros' "Departure of Louis XVIII.," Couture's "Roman Orgy," and Horace Vernet's "Taking of Constantine."

We must needs add to the list Jean Gigoux' "Death of Leonardo da Vinci," a painty, inharmonious canvas, the presence of which on the line is no doubt a hopeless mystery to the uninitiated public, ignorant of

(*) See *Art and Letters*, for July 1889, vol. III, p. 104.

the imperious claims on a Special Commissioner, and of the complex considerations which have forced more than one reluctant concession from him.

Blemishes of this sort there must necessarily be, but the greater part of the works we have mentioned hold their places on their merits, though time has, in many cases, made cruel havoc of their pristine brilliance of colour, and even threatens a total eclipse of original glories in bituminous night. We own to a feeling of regret that Delacroix' "Battle of Poitiers" should figure in the space that might have been so splendidly filled by the gorgeous "Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople," while the "Departure of Louis XVIII.," one of Gros' feeblest creations, is a poor substitute for the wonderful "Victims of the Plague at Jaffa." We further make bold to say that the public would have been very well pleased to exchange M. Gigoux' "Death of Leonardo," for Géricault's "Raft of the Medusa." But the Commissioner was anxious to restrict his demands on the Louvre as much as possible; he decided not to despoil it, even temporarily, of the masterpieces of Delacroix, Gros, and Géricault. Thanks to this triumph of administrative discretion, David reigns almost without a rival at the great centennial show in the Champ de Mars.

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David spent four years over his picture of "The Coronation." When he recognized that he had drawn to the utmost upon all the resources of his talent, he went himself to announce to the Emperor that his task was accomplished, and the new monarch appointed a day to visit his painter's *atelier*.

Here we will make way for the great artist's faithful biographer, E. J. Delécluze, and let him tell the tale of the famous visit, which has all the importance of an historic event.

"On the day appointed, the Emperor, the Empress Josephine, and other members of the Imperial family, attended by the ministers and the officers of the household, and preceded and followed by a long procession of musicians and cavalry, set out for the Rue Saint-Jacques, and finally halted in the Place de la Sorbonne, near the small lateral door of the ancient church of Cluny.



"For some time past David's disposition of his principal figures had been the engrossing topic of Parisian salons. The courtiers attacked the attitude of the Emperor, and objected that the painter had made the Empress the heroine of the drama, by choosing the moment of her coronation rather than that of the Emperor's. The criticism was plausible enough in itself, and all those who envied the painter his rank and fame were on the tiptoe of malicious expectation, hoping that this rendering would suffice to damn the painter's work in Napoleon's judgment. It is difficult to understand how the artists and courtiers of the day could have held David himself responsible for the Emperor's attitude on this canvas. The characteristic forethought and susceptibility of the new sovereign alike pointed to the fact that he had discussed, arranged, and approved every detail with his Court painter. David had received his orders and had faithfully carried them out. He had been instructed to represent Napoleon, already crowned, placing the diadem on the head of the kneeling Josephine, the Pope assisting only as a witness of the rite.

"When the whole Court had grouped itself round the picture, Napoleon placed himself in front, without uncovering, and closely examined every detail of the thirty-foot canvas for about half an hour, David and the rest of the company standing meanwhile silent and motionless. Those who were present have described the emotion and excitement caused by the impressive nature of the visit and by curiosity as to what the Emperor's judgment of the work would prove to be.

"At last Napoleon spoke, his eyes still fixed on the picture :

"'You have done well, David, very well. You have divined my whole soul, you have expressed French chivalry in my person. I thank you for the manner in which you have shewn posterity the proof of affection I desired to give her who shares with me the cares of government.' As he pronounced these words, the Empress advanced, and placed herself at his right side, the painter standing at his left. The Emperor then turned to David, uncovered, bent his head slightly in salutation, and speaking in a high incisive voice, added : 'I congratulate you, David.'

"'Sire,' replied the painter, greatly moved, 'I receive your congratulations on behalf of all artists, counting myself deeply honoured in being

the one to whom you have addressed such an homage.' While the Emperor returned to his carriage, the courtiers crowded round the painter, complimenting him on his work, and the company dispersed, fully persuaded that no other rendering of the coronation scene would have been tolerable."

David's gigantic *œuvre* is well represented in the Champ de Mars by four most interesting canvases : "The Coronation," "Gérard, member of the National Convention and his Family," "Lavoisier and his Wife," and the admirable "Portrait of Madame Récamier," the last a masterpiece.

It is now almost eighty years since David signed the "Coronation." Time has only heightened its beauties, and it has successfully stood the test of several generations of criticism, more or less enlightened. Writers innumerable have descanted on the noble attitudes of the Emperor and Empress, on the breadth and dignity of treatment displayed in the portraits of the great dignitaries of the Empire. Others have found fault with the colour and even the drawing of the spectators placed in the tribunes of the church, have objected that the field of action is too vast, as compared with the relative size of the figures, and takes away from the impressiveness which it was so important to preserve to the actors in the drama. Finally, all critics have agreed to eulogize the admirable execution of the head and hands in the figure of Pius VII.

Of a work so often and so exhaustively discussed, there remains little to say. We will only add that in spite of dawning defects—soon to be disastrously exaggerated in the "Distribution of the Eagles in the Champ de Mars," a mournful evidence of David's failing genius—the "Coronation" holds and will continue to hold its place as one of the most glorious pages of our national art. This is sufficiently attested by the brilliant success it commands in its present position, surrounded by works of the first rank. The eye rests with ever-increasing pleasure on the *philosophic* treatment of detail in this vast composition, on its masterly illumination, at once brilliant and harmonious. We feel that here David freed himself definitively from that predilection for Caravaggio and Domenichino, which had told so perniciously on much of his work.

"Painting is the management of greys," he was fond of saying towards the close of his career. And in his last works, and notably in the "Coro-



nation," there is an evident striving after the manner of Veronese. We see plainly that the painter was haunted by the Venetian master's great banquet scenes, and was aiming at that "large and fluid effect," which he called "the great charm of painting," by the use of grey and silvery half-tones, "laid on sparingly, without useless impasto, and with a due regard for values." The secret of this special charm has never been more successfully solved by David than in this, his masterpiece.

Side by side with the "Coronation" is a very interesting canvas, which figures in the catalogue under this title : "Gérard, member of the National Convention, and his family." It belongs to the Museum of Le Mans, and strange to say, we can find no trace of it in the otherwise complete and careful catalogue of David's works compiled by his grandson. It belongs evidently to the same period as the portraits of Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau and Marat, and has all the qualities which make those two canvases the most personal of David's works, to our mind. We recognize the same seductive originality of colour, the same very modern insistance on living actualities. They prove conclusively that David had gleaned more in Vien's *atelier* than a passion for the antique, and that what the painter of Greeks and Romans, of Leonidas and the Horatii, of Socrates and the Sabines, had been above all concerned to find in his studies at the Vatican, the Capitol, and the Villa Medici, were the pure principles of design, without which the most gifted painter can produce only ephemeral works.

The portrait-group of Lavoisier and his wife, which figures on a neighbouring panel, bears further testimony to David's pleasure in modern subjects, and the jealous care with which he assimilated the colour, movement, and expression of actual life to a bold and learned precision of form. This canvas is one of his most graceful works, and years seem only to have heightened the exquisite freshness of the tints. Lavoisier is represented writing at a table covered with a red cloth. He is dressed in black, and wears his hair powdered. He has paused for a moment in his work to turn to his wife, who leans on his shoulder with her left arm in an attitude of infinite grace. She is standing, and wears a gown of white lawn, tied with pale blue ribbons. Two or three thick strands of fair hair escape from under the huge curled wig she wears. Her right

hand rests upon the table, against the red velvet drapery of which Lavoisier's leg stands out in relief. A glass globe and an instrument of copper are on the floor to the right. The background is a wainscoted wall, divided by fluted columns. To the left, in the middle distance, is a gilded arm-chair, on which lies a black mantle.

The above summary description, borrowed in great part from David's own notes, gives the superficial features of this remarkable composition, the dominant sentiment of which is a seductive, not to say caressing grace, which gives it a place apart in David's vigorous *œuvre*. When we stand before this delicate composition, and note its sustained simplicity, its brilliant, supple, and essentially modern handling, we find it difficult to believe that the painter executed it very shortly after his "Oath of the Horatii," and almost simultaneously with his "Brutus." Realizing the fact, we are filled with wonder at the complex talent of the great artist who produced those sombre, tragic, and stormily handled works, and who was equally successful in the expressive variety of his renderings, whether he had to deal with the heroic feats of antiquity or of our own revolutionary epoch, with the scenic pomp of Napoleonic solemnities, or with the most graceful and delicate developments of feminine charm. I know nothing more exquisite in its way, or more hauntingly delicious, than the "Portrait of Madame Récamier," which M. Antonin Proust has with commendable judgment borrowed from the Louvre for the Centennial Exhibition, and which figures on the same panel as the foregoing, shedding a crowning lustre on the painter's memory. In science, colour, and design alike, the work is a masterpiece, even in its unfinished state. Its effect is indeed rather accentuated than diminished by its incompleteness, which gives us a clearer insight into the master's intention and methods. We see that after a reverent study of his lovely model's individuality, in a design of scrupulous precision, he rubbed in the shadows lightly with Cassel earth, leaving the lights a tone lower than was required by the general harmony. This allowed of his giving a look of at-once-ness to his final painting, and thanks to this method, which was that adopted by most of the great masters of former ages, the freshness of his colour has scarcely suffered from time.



The portrait of Madame Récamier is too well known to need lengthy description. The artist has depicted the beautiful *précieuse* half reclining on a Grecian couch, in a bath-room. She has on a long white robe of antique fashion, which falls away from bare arms of exquisite proportions and little pink feet, marvellous in the dainty reality of their modelling. The refined and charming head is turned towards the spectator, who meets the full gaze of a pair of large mysterious eyes, the seriousness of which is relieved by an expression of candour dashed with innocent malice, and of almost childish simplicity. The robe which veils the soft contours and slender curves of the lovely body, fresh from the bath like a dew-besprinkled flower, falls to the floor in cunningly graceful folds.

We learn from M. Jules David that his illustrious grandfather was at work on this charming portrait about the June of 1800, and had secured the help of Ingres for the accessories. He had nearly finished his task, when he learnt from Gérard that Madame Récamier, infected by the popular *furore* for the painter of "Psyche," had commissioned him also to paint her portrait. This furnished David with the justification he had perhaps been anxious to find for discontinuing his work. He had, we learn, become impatient of the little difficulties that are almost inevitable in any dealings with the queen of an adoring multitude, and his vanity rebelled against the necessity for wearing spectacles in the presence of his beautiful sitter. When Madame Récamier presented herself for one of the final sittings, "Madame," said he, "artists have their caprices as well as ladies. You must allow me to indulge a fancy I have in connection with your portrait. I want to keep it just as it is."

David's *œuvre* is colossal in extent. His studies, sketches, and drawings, many of which are of considerable importance, are to be found by the hundred in public galleries and private collections. Before taking up the brush to give definite form to one of his great mythological conceptions, or to fix the semblance of some famous contemporary on canvas, he would multiply notes, studies, and researches, till he had thoroughly assimilated the exact attitudes, expressions, and movements, proper to his personages, even to the folds of their draperies.

Superb as is the pageant of French masterpieces now marshalled in the Champ de Mars, it was not in the nature of things that it could claim to be a perfect synthesis of our art. Many considerations made it impossible to form a collection of typical works which should give a satisfactory abstract of each artist's *œuvre*. Are not the greater number of such works in the national treasure-house at the Louvre? David's triumph is assured, even on the lines here followed. But how much more dazzling would that triumph have been, had it been possible to give a place, beside the great Imperial picture and the admirable portraits which make so brave a show in the balcony of the Dome, for the master's "Horatii," his "Sabines," his "Leonidas," his "Serment du Jeu de Paume," his "Marat," his "Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau," the sketch of his "Barra," and his portraits of the "Marquise de Sorcy de Thélusson," of the "Marquise d'Orvilliers," of "Pius VII.," of "M. Sériziat," and many others. Such a selection would have given us a perfect *précis* of the painter's powerful and varied performance. Therein might we have read, as in a quadruple mirror, the secret of his violent and stormy soul, might have traced the workings of his severe æsthetic sense, his revolutionary passions, that *artistic* admiration for the dazzling pomp of the modern Cæsar which so largely inspired him, his profound reverence for sincerity and simplicity in the rendering of contemporary life and actualities. Surely, before such a display as this, the most irreconcilable of modern impressionists would involuntarily bow the knee, heedless of Raoux' Venetian reminiscences, or the "lamentable voices" of the worshippers of Greuze, deaf for once in a way to the threadbare cant of romantic criticism, and fain to confess that David was something more than the "king of firemen;" that Roman casque and Grecian cothurnus had not absorbed his entire soul, and that finally he might even be forgiven for having unconsciously fathered Messieurs Abel de Pujol, Bouton, Fabre, Richard Fleury, Court, and some others.

* * *

In writing these few notes, we have several times been obliged to do violence to our feelings by keeping our criticisms within the laconic



forms prescribed. But no subject we have yet touched upon has so strongly tempted us to exceed our allotted limits as the present. We can conceive of no more interesting study in its way than that of David's talent in all those multiple transformations which so closely figured the startling variations of his sincere, fiery, and impressionable soul throughout the political career into which he threw himself with so much passion.

David's fame rests not only on such achievements as the "Horatii," the "Socrates," the "Marat," the "Sabines," the "Coronation," and his many superb portraits. He further takes rank as the distinguished head of a school, though he had, properly speaking, no special method of instruction, as may be divined from those vague artistic theories he was fond of formulating with somewhat too much of insistance from the tribune of the National Convention.

David's school holds an important place in the history of French art. In proof of such an assertion we have only to quote the names of the most famous among those who accepted the master's tradition, and who are enrolled by all the historians in the ranks of his pupils. Such are, Drouais, Couder, Wicar, Fabre, Hennequin, Girodet, Gérard, Gros, Guérin, Granet, Revoil, Robert-Fleury, Daguerre, Bouton, Léopold-Robert, Schnetz, Ingres, etc.

The influence of the great painter extended even to sculpture, and in the marbles of Chaudet, of Dejoux, of the Italian Bartolini, of the Spaniard Alvarez, and of the German Tieck, we recognize the application of the doctrine specially dear to David, which may be epitomized as an insistance on the intimate blending of the antique ideal with the actual aspects of life. Yet David, if an absolute ruler, was no narrow autocrat, and it is recorded to his honour that his sincere passion for art and truth led him to publicly express his admiration for painters differing so widely from himself in their artistic aspirations as Rembrandt, Teniers, and Ostade; that he frequently warned his pupils against a too painful search after ideal perfection; that he was fond of telling them they must ever seek truth and beauty, and that "in art all excellence is excellent." No master, perhaps, has turned out a greater number of clever pupils, though, strange to say, none of them imitated their master very closely,

and we fail to find in the works of most of such as we have enumerated that *learned simplicity,* which David so highly esteemed in art.

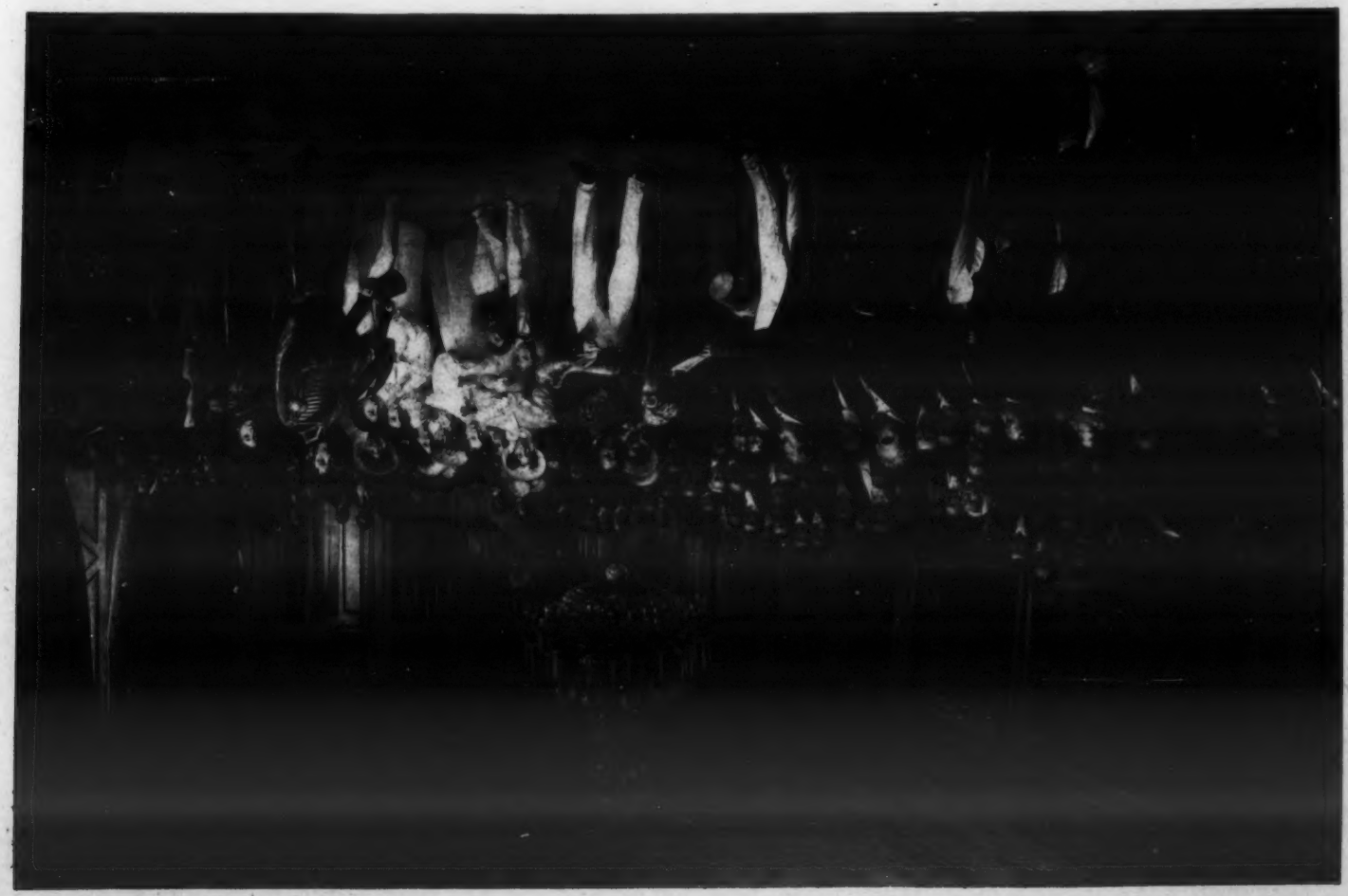
We can notice only four of them here, Girodet, Gérard, Gros, and Ingres, whose diversity of talents fully demonstrates the liberality of David's teaching, and the care with which he developed the natural aptitude of each pupil.

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It is much to be regretted that David should have left unfinished a series of notes on his pupils, in which he details their individual qualities, their methods, and the hopes he built upon the future of each. These candid and highly interesting criticisms are written in a style of great piquancy, and in a continuous form might have proved of great service to the historians of French painting in the nineteenth century.

But as we are fortunate enough to possess his analysis of Girodet, we will beg leave to quote certain passages. No words of our own can give the reader so just an idea of the graceful painter of "Atala" as these sincere and authoritative lines :—

"It was in Rome that Girodet's powers reached their full perfection. As was my habit, I gave him some counsel before he left me, touching his course of study in Italy. I cautioned him against exaggeration in conception, reminding him that beauty is always simple, even when most vigorous, and bidding him study this truth in the works of Raphael, of Leonardo, and even of Michel-angelo; I warned him that his chief defect was his tendency to exaggerate, but that he must be on his guard against a forced simplicity, no less than against any other species of exaggeration, and that all excess is affectation." Is not David's whole artistic doctrine summed up in these words of exhortation to his pupil? Again : "He showed by the studies he sent home to Paris during his sojourn in Italy, and notably by his picture of the 'Sleeping Endymion,' that he had laid my counsels to heart." (Here follows a somewhat too florid eulogy of this very remarkable work.) "He has done much good work since," continues David, "but I greatly regret his falling off from that simplicity in which he once excelled..... After his return from Rome,



his friends made his reputation in the newspapers..... Had they not succeeded in alienating him from me, my experience might have been of service to him, and I might have warned him of many pitfalls in his way.....

"I should have pointed out the extravagance of such a subject as his 'Incident of the Deluge,' shewing him that even a talent so brilliant as his own must succumb under the burden of such a theme. That if such subjects are to be looked upon as permissible, it will no longer be possible to place any limits upon individual choice, and that we may as well bid good-bye at once to the dignity of art and to those high ideals which should alone occupy the true painter of history..... I should have entreated him to beware of false compliments and falser friends, should have told him that such fulsome eulogies were for the most part merely covert attacks upon two of his rivals, Gérard and Gros; and that his genius had no need of any such unworthy weapons."

David criticises the picture of "Atala" with much judgment. He has nothing to say against the choice of subject this time, finding it no doubt sufficiently "noble" for his taste, but he falls foul of several details of composition, notably the execution of the hands, to which the painter has given all the appearance of life, in order, doubtless, to justify their clasp on the crucifix, "whilst the head and the rest of the flesh so admirably render the pallor and rigidity of death..... By exaggeration," he adds, "I mean that desire for intensity of expression which leads an artist to overstep the bounds of nature."

The notes on Girodet conclude with these lines : "M. Girodet should look for suffrages to the public, not to the venal pens of journalists. Let him lay to heart this incontestable axiom—that vigour is an excellent thing in its place, but that over-intensity of any sort is only another name for affectation. M. Girodet, in conversation with me, too frequently confounded talent with genius; I was fond of insisting, in reply, that talent is the enemy of genius. 'Talent, M. Girodet, is the will o' the wisp that will lead you astray.' His reply was :

"'If I really have this talent you warn me against, I shall soon have genius.'

"I await results. On the whole, he is a pupil of whom I am proud.

And I should not have dwelt so long upon his characteristics, had I not felt that his career was likely to be a remarkable one."

However this may be, these brief notes give us a perfect summary of David's æsthetic creed and of his artistic convictions. Besides the three well known works mentioned in the notes, Girodet was the author of several compositions of less interest, such as "Hippocrates refusing the presents of the Persians," "Danae," "Fingal," "The Revolt of Cairo," and a number of interesting portraits, the best of which are perhaps those of Merlin de Douai, Madame Reizet, Cathelineau, and Bonchamp.

Girodet's dominant characteristic is grace. His drawing is extremely elegant, though somewhat mannered; he too often reproduced in his later works the conventionally blue and hazy atmosphere of his first picture, the "Endymion." David perfectly summed up Girodet's defects in the following criticism : "When an artist looks at the works of Raphael or of Paul Veronese, he takes courage; painting seems an easy thing enough; but when he turns to Girodet's it seems a toil, irksome as that of a galley-slave."

* * *

The notes on Girodet given above are followed by this introduction to a rival :

"I will now pass on to M. Gérard, whose talents are of a totally different order." But here the illustrious painter's jottings come abruptly to an end, and we are left in ignorance as to what David thought of one of his most distinguished pupils. We know, however, that David showed a strong predilection for the painter of "Belisarius" and the "Battle of Austerlitz," a predilection fully justified by Gérard's noble character, his sincere attachment to his master's political doctrines, and his reverence for the antique tradition, spite of the fact that most of his subjects were drawn from modern life, and that the greater part of his *œuvre* consists of very noteworthy portraits.

Gérard is one of the most correct of the classicists. His desire for precision is indeed excessive, and occasionally produces a flawlessness of rendering which wearies. Personally I greatly prefer the vibrating



actuality of David's "Madame Récamier" to the faultless modelling and polished perfection of Gérard's. Gérard's *œuvre* is considerable and very varied. In his beginnings he devoted himself to mythological subjects, as in his "Psyche," or to incidents of Roman history, as in his "Belisarius." Later, however, he sought inspiration in our national annals, and achieved an almost equal success with his "Entry of Henri IV. into Paris," and his "Battle of Rivoli." That he was a clever exponent of allegorical themes is proved by the four pendentives in the Pantheon, "Death," "Fatherland," "Justice," and "Glory." Lastly, he now and then illustrated saintly legend, as in his "Ecstasy of St. Theresa," but here he is less satisfactory. Before fame and fortune smiled upon him, he like Prud'hon and Girodet, occasionally drew vignettes for Didot's editions of Virgil and Racine. But Gérard's chief claim to distinction rests on his portraits, many of which are really admirable. His reputation as a portraitist was firmly established by such works as his "Mademoiselle Brongniart," "Madame Barbier-Valbonne," and "Madame Récamier," and the popularity that ensued weighed somewhat heavily upon the painter during his most brilliant years. His *atelier* was turned into a sort of portrait factory at the time when the kings, princes, and generals of the allied armies were installed in Paris.

The portraits he painted at this stage of his career are for the most part feeble productions. Among the best of those dating before 1814, we may add to those already mentioned the portraits of Moreau, of Talleyrand, of the members of the Imperial family, and lastly that of J. B. Isabey, one of his most admirable works in this *genre*.

* * *

Gros was undoubtedly the greatest of David's pupils. When his famous "Victims of the Plague at Jaffa" was exhibited at the Salon of 1804, it roused a fine enthusiasm in the artistic world. The great canvas marked a new departure in its violent and unexpected juxtaposition of colours, its bold intermixture of tones. The impression it created was profound, and the furore among the public reached its height when the rest of David's pupils brought a splendid palm and decorated their

fellow student's work. Gros had risen in a bound to the first rank among French painters, acclaimed alike by the crowd and by his exultant master, for David, whose great soul was incapable of jealousy, rejoiced sincerely at his pupil's triumph, though Gros repeatedly gave proof in his works of his secession from the principles of David's teaching. The master paid a generous public tribute to the much admired work, declaring at the Salon that the solid and yet brilliant qualities of Gros' picture would have a most beneficent effect on the French school of painting, in which colour was too much neglected.

The "Victims of the Plague at Jaffa" was Gros' first great historical picture. It is rightly accounted his masterpiece, and he himself was fond of insisting in later life that it was the finest inspiration of his youth, notwithstanding the brilliant successes he had since achieved in his "Battle of Aboukir," "Battle of Eylau," "Taking of Madrid," "Battle of the Pyramids," and "Battle of Wagram."

In this great composition, so full of action, so pure in design, so rich and varied in colour, all Gros' artistic excellence is summarized. It is well worthy a place of honour in our National Museum, beside such works as "The Sabines," "The Raft of the Medusa," and "The entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople."

Besides the famous pictures above mentioned, which established Gros' reputation as the first battle-painter of his time, the following would have to be included in any list of his more noteworthy works: "The Interview between Napoleon and the Emperor of Austria in Moravia," "Francis I. and Charles V. visiting the Church of Saint Denis," "The Duchess of Angoulême embarking at Pauillac," "Charles X. at the camp at Rheims," and the "Departure of Louis XVIII.," an important canvas in which Gros' talent shews itself in a new light, and which, in its accurate rendering of contemporary fact, forms a most valuable historical document. This work figures in the Centennial Exhibition beside an excellent portrait of the First Consul on horseback, and one of General Fournier-Sarlovèze, dazzling as the sun in his rich hussar uniform. Gros was the author of a considerable number of portraits, and the names of some of his sitters, such as General Lasalle, the Empress Josephine,


Ingres
Rome 1816.

Louis XVIII., Charles X., and Chaptal, sufficiently indicate his vogue in this *genre*.

* * *

From 1850 to 1851 Ingres held the post of Director of the *École des Beaux-Arts*. "My aim," he remarks, "was to induce the observance and the study of nature, by the help of Raphael and the ancients. The class-room was always full. I spoke eloquently, my audience has regretted me deeply."

"Shall I tell you," he adds further, "the only means by which it is possible to ensure the future of painting, sculpture, architecture, and music in France? The entire control of the fine arts should be entrusted to a painter. A painter will understand their direction better, in a general way, than any other artist, better than a man of the world, certainly better than a man of letters."

These two quotations from the master's own official catechism have considerably lightened our task. They perfectly express both the method and the mental state of one endowed with all the arrogance of a Pope.

How I am haunted by his melodramatic Saint Symphorien! Is it possible this muddy travesty, in which M. Ingres' successful study of "nature by the help of Raphael" is so predominant that the principal figures are not even in their planes, should still find enthusiastic admirers among us?

And that gelatinous "Odalisque" whom we should fear to lay a finger on lest she should collapse like a soap bubble! And that preposterous gingerbread "Jupiter," throning it on an Empire chair, against an expanse of granite clouds, callous to the strange caresses of the Thetis whose doughy bosom looks like a prolongation of her arm.

Is it necessary to enlarge upon the "Joan of Arc" who holds mournful station in the Louvre, the frigid "Stratonice," the "Sixtine Chapel," the "Two Aretinos," the "Sword of Henri IV.," and the "Death of Leonardo da Vinci?"

In Ingres' immense *œuvre,* we know of nothing but "The Spring" *(La Source)*, which blooms with beauty, innocence and youth; "The Apotheosis of Homer," and the admirable portraits of Napoleon, the Princesse de Broglie,

Madame Reiset, and Madame Moitessier, in which the design has not been ruined by the colour. In the face of the contemptuous pity we shall provoke among M. Ingres' faithful admirers, we maintain that few artists have produced so many trivial and useless works as the painter of "The Spring."

Passing, however, into the room devoted to drawings, we there yield to none in our admiration for the famous painter. Before the panel devoted to his work with the pencil criticism is disarmed. Every drawing, with the exception of two or three which have been spoilt by tasteless colour-washes, is a masterpiece in its way. We know of no artist in any age who has more finely rendered the expression of a head, the nervousness of a hand, by means at once so simple, so accurate, so life-like, and so original, as those employed by Ingres in his small pencil portraits, before which we stand and bow in unreserved admiration.

ARMAND DAYOT.





The coach has been rumbling along all day under the scorching rays of a June sun, now shaking the pavement of a town with a roll like thunder, now jolting noiselessly through puddles and cart-ruts. The pine woods and melancholy flats of Hampshire are left behind, and the vehicle is crossing the green oak-dotted meadows of Surrey. Stretches of corn-fields, now almost ripe and swept by the breeze, park-avenues neatly gravelled, pastures where sleepy cows lie basking, little hamlets, low houses of dingy bricks with narrow windows, square, stumpy church towers the centres of graveyards, ducks paddling in the farm-yards, children screaming after the carriage, beggars sitting in the hedgerows, staring at it blankly—everything flies past like a flash of lightning!

The sole occupants of the vehicle are a lad of fifteen or sixteen, and a girl of perhaps twelve or thirteen. She is small, pale, and delicate, but very sweet-looking; the boy is handsome and stalwart, brown and black-haired. His limbs are rather heavy, his wrists and knees large-boned; but this lack of refinement is compensated for by the harmony of their proportions and the elastic strength of every movement. He wears shoes without buckles, pepper-and-salt spun-silk stockings, coat and breeches of homespun frieze, a plain frill, no ruffles to his sleeves and no lace to his hat; a humble outfit altogether. The girl's attire, though simple enough and by no means new, shows more traces of elegance, and betrays her as of a class above that of her companion. Just now

she is asleep, and the lad has made his valise serve as her pillow, and has covered her with his cloak. Every minute he finds something to do, driving away the flies, drawing the leather curtains, re-arranging the impromptu couch which is disturbed by the jolting of the coach. The little girl, who seems accustomed to these attentions, only half awakes, and smiles, murmuring sleepily : "Thank you, Dominique."

Then Dominique stares out of window at the country, seeming greatly interested in the products of the land; or he sits meditative, watching the dusty motes as they dance in a sunbeam, and looking now and again at the young girl—a look which has in it something motherly and something dog-like, so full is it of tender care and humble devotion. Meanwhile the sun has gone down behind the hill; the sky turns cold, the earth grows dark, all the tints of green are lost in the gathering gloom, every object loses its distinctness. Far away, through the hot haze of a summer night, sparks of light peep out, multiplying and thickening at every step now; these are the lights of London.

Half an hour later, the coach draws up at the door of the Golden Cross, Charing Cross. Two persons are awaiting its arrival, a woman and a man—Madame Vincent and M. Boche. Madame Vincent is a milliner, M. Boche is a philosopher, as might be suspected from the appearance of his threadbare coat, and the calm air with which he sits on the stone bench, while Madame Vincent, her face red with fussing, trots to and fro, fumes, and wipes her forehead.

The coach has not fairly stopped before she is questioning the coachman and the guard in broken English.

"Have you brought my doll? The doll for Madame Vincent, if you please, Messieurs?"

The coachman does not seem to hear, and the guard stares at her, but does not answer.

"Monsieur Boche! But really you are inconceivable! You see me struggling with these stupid men, who pretend not to understand me, and there you sit quietly taking your pinch of snuff! The idea does not even occur to you that you might help a poor woman, who has nevertheless," she adds very tartly, "some claim on your politeness."

At this direct appeal to his feelings, M. Boche closes his snuff-box, and rises with a sigh.

"Have you a parcel, from Paris, *via* Saint-Malo and Southampton, for Madame Vincent?"

"No, no parcel for Madame Vincent."

Madame Vincent is in a fury. No parcel, no doll!

"What is to become of me? I am a ruined woman! It is this abominable revolution that is at the bottom of it! It is all the fault of you rascally philosophers. You may laugh, Monsieur Boche, laugh as much as you like. It is all the fault of Rousseau who has turned the heads of the common people! Under the monarchy, hark you, did the doll fail to come one single week?"

While Madame Vincent is in despair, Dominique has roused his little companion as gently as he can."

"Mademoiselle Madeleine! Here we are—we are in London."

Madeleine sits up on the seat, and instinctively smoothes her hair with her slender little fingers.

"Well, since we are here in London," says she, "do you see my uncle?"

"I have never had the honour of seeing M. le Commandeur. How should I know him?"

Madeleine looked out. No one, excepting Madame Vincent and M. Boche. Then she grew frightened.

"He is not there! What is to become of us in this great strange city, where we do not know the language, and without money? For you have no more, have you, Dominique?"

"No indeed, Mademoiselle, your ring paid our passage to Southampton from Jersey, and my mother's watch has just paid for our coach journey here. I have six silver pieces left."

The coach door was opened. Madeleine paused on the lower step, hesitating to set foot on the inhospitable foreign pavement. However, she must get out; she jumped, gracefully and with an air, for there was dignity and grace in all her movements. And Boche, seeing this little lady, so neat in figure, so elegant and dainty in every gesture, with a

faint aroma of fine-lady manners, could not forbear exclaiming in an undertone : "Why, you might almost fancy that this was your doll, but in living flesh and blood!"

"That little girl! Ah, what a bright idea you have suggested to me!"

"I! I have suggested an idea to you?"

Madame Vincent stepped forward to meet the two young people, armed with her most affable smile, the smile she was wont to put on when selling French laces to Mrs. Fitzherbert or the Duchess of Devonshire.

"You seem to be French, and to be seeking something. Allow me to help you. My name is Madame Vincent, milliner and lacewoman, in Dean Street, at the sign of *Le Petit Paris;* and this gentleman is M. Boche, my boarder and very good friend."

Madeleine did not lose her presence of mind as a maiden of rank; she replied with a touch of patronizing condescension which ill beseemed her situation at the moment :

"I, Ma'ame, am the daughter of the Marquis de Combreval. My parents were carried off to Rennes, and from thence to Paris, where they are waiting to be tried by the revolutionary tribunal. The peasants burned our house down, and I escaped with my nurse to Saint-Malo. Then we crossed over to Jersey; there my poor nurse fell ill, and we lost her. I then took ship for England with my foster-brother, Dominique, whom you see. One of our friends, who started by an earlier ship, was to let my uncle de Sauves know that we were coming."

"Monsieur de Sauves!" cried M. Boche. "Alas, my poor dear young lady, if the papers tell the truth, he is at this moment in prison at Lille."

"Good God!—What then—we have spent all we had, and—"

"Come home with me," said Madame Vincent. "You will find yourself in good company, the Chevalier des Vallergues and the Abbé de Marsillac, who have emigrated as you have done."

"The Chevalier des Vallergues! He is, I think, connected with our family."

"Then what can be better?"

"But how are we to pay you?"



"Oh, if that is all that troubles you—you will do as others do, and earn your living. That tall fellow there looks strong and willing; he will find work to do, if it is only carrying water. Do you know that Monsieur l'Abbé makes two shillings a day by turning snuff-boxes? And as for the Chevalier, he keeps the books at Jasmin's—his former valet—a wig-maker now in Piccadilly. Have you no talent you can turn to account? Can you draw, or play the harp, or the harpsichord?"

"I, Ma'ame! I can do nothing but unravel gold lace and cut out black paper shades. Oh, yes, and I can graft and bud roses; perhaps I might find employment as a gardener."

The idea of this slender, bewitching little fairy, toiling at the earth, made M. Boche and Madame Vincent both smile.

"And supposing," said the milliner, "I were to find you an occupation consisting simply in wearing a silk gown, satin shoes, and a hat and feathers, in short, in dressing like a great lady to be looked at by all the great ladies of London?"

"That would be delightful!"

"Very well; then it is settled. I have the very thing for you. Now come home, and have some supper, for I suppose you are dying of hunger."

* * *

The house occupied by Madame Vincent in Dean Street, Soho, is now inhabited by poor creatures who drive a melancholy trade and make little enough by it. It was then rather less squalid. On the ground floor was the shop, in which a bed was made up every evening for Peggy, Madame Vincent's servant, and behind the shop was the parlour, where the inmates met, and where, three times a day, the table was spread, at noon, at five, and at ten, for breakfast, dinner, and supper. On the first floor was Madame Vincent's own room, in which stood a four-post bed of which she was justly proud. It was in this room, crammed full of dressmakers' dummies, cardboard boxes, patterns, and pieces of silk laid out for show, that Madame Vincent received her customers, whose carriages frequently blocked the street. Next to this was the bedroom of her late departed

niece—a pretty enough little nook, and this she made ready for Mademoiselle de Combreval. Above stairs were the rooms inhabited by the Chevalier, the Abbé, and M. Boche. At the top of all was a loft lighted by a dormer, broiling hot in summer, bitterly cold in winter. A straw mattress, bursting at the seams, on a couple of trestles which groaned and threatened to collapse at a touch, did duty as a bed. It was the only article of furniture in the place, and indeed the only one there could be, for the room was a mere cupboard in point of size. This was what, henceforth, went by the name of M. Dominique's room.

Next day, by about two in the afternoon, customers began to arrive. Peggy, who had donned a cap with flowers in it, and had even washed her hands, opened the door to the ladies, and to the regular question : "Is the doll come?" replied, with a twinkle in her eye : "Yes, my lady; upstairs, bless you, my lady! Only it is—she is— Well, your ladyship will be surprised."

And her ladyship, vastly curious, picked up her skirts with both hands, and flew up Madame Vincent's steep, narrow stairs.

Readers who are familiar with the details of Paris life in the eighteenth century are doubtless well aware that every week, during the last few years before the Revolution, a doll was despatched from the Rue Saint-Honoré, dressed in the very latest fashion of Versailles. Its mission was to instruct the fine ladies of London, of Vienna, and of Saint Petersburg as to what was the newest thing in dress, how skirts were worn, and hair dressed, and the last taste in shoes, gloves, and perfumes. This doll, it was said, even made her way into the harem of the Grand Turk, where it was the admiration of Sultanas, of half-Sultanas, of quarter-Sultanas, down to the most infinitesimal fractions of female sovereignty in the seraglio. In this famous doll, on which fifty pairs of hands had exercised twenty different arts, everything was worthy of meditation, from her shift to her fan, from the buckles in her shoes to the bows in her hair.

On the day of the storming of the Bastille the doll for the first time failed to arrive; then it came at irregular intervals. It was not that

Paris had abdicated its supremacy in matters of taste. No; Paris revolutionised, overrun by *tricoteuses* and horrible men in *carmagnole* jackets and red caps, still could lay down the law in the matter of bonnets, hair-dressing, and petticoats. And Europe, which rejected our institutions with horror, yielded to our dictates in fashion.

Looking back across the years, it seems to us that in those *dies nefasti* the private life of Paris must have been in a state of suspended animation, as it were, in an agonizing catalepsy, stopped like the hand of a clock after an earthquake. Not at all. Everything went on, jolting and struggling. The poor wretches who had no money drudged to earn a pittance, and those whose only object on earth is amusement did their best to find pleasure in the midst of a world in ruins.

There were breakfasts at Meudon, suppers in the obscene dens of Méot, adventures to be sought in the fetid alleys of the Palais-Royal; puns were made, ices were eaten, cakes were crunched; folks complained not of the Terror, but of the heat; they fanned themselves exclaiming: "Faith! I am dying of it!" while only a few yards off, men and women were dying in earnest. And there were dressmakers and milliners whose brains were seething as they are at this day; real artists in dress and head-gear who, when they went to bed at night, struck their brows and cried: "Merciful Heaven! what can I invent for to-morrow? what will become of the world if I cannot bring out something new!"

Unluckily war is full of malignant cruelty. War stopped the doll on her travels, just as though it had been the wooden horse of Troy itself. To reach her destination she had to journey by by-ways, assume a disguise, fall into strange hands, avoid the republican authorities who regarded her as an aristocrat, a *ci-devant,* and the soldiers of the coalition who believed her to be stuffed with revolutionary notions. And after all she did not always arrive, in spite of the most ingenious precautions.

Now we can understand the anxiety of Madame Vincent's customers.

The leaders of beauty and rank all crowded to the little first-floor room, where, as at the Pantheon and Ranelagh, they elbowed the famous actresses of the day.

To each of these ladies Madame Vincent told her tale : How the daughter of the Marquis de Combreval had succeeded in escaping from France by pretending to be a milliner's girl carrying the famous doll to England, and dressing herself up in the said doll's finery. She did not tell them that she had spent the night in manufacturing her dress, and the morning in fitting it on. Madeleine stood on a little platform like a fine lady in miniature. She played her part with perfect grace; raised her arm or foot, turned to the right or the left, walked and curtsied; and the ladies gathered round her, petting her, twisting her about, and kissing her. "This way, pretty one!" "Come here, sweetheart." "Is not she a sweet pet?" "What pretty frilling!" "And to think that her father and mother are to have their heads cut off to-morrow or next day!" "I think those striped stuffs will suit me to a miracle!" "My dear, you will look like a zebra!" "A zebra—vastly droll! That is a good name for this new style. We will all be dressed as zebras!" "Bend your pretty head a little, my treasure, and let me see how your hair is dressed! That aigrette is delicious, I vow! Oh, there is nothing like Paris!"

And the others in chorus : "There is nothing like Paris!"

Among the customers were a few dressmakers discreetly noting, criticising, comparing, meditating; they went away lost in thought.

At length it was evening, and when the last carriage had turned the corner into Oxford Road :

"You have played your part like an angel!" cried Madame Vincent, crimson with satisfaction. "If it were not for respect I could hug you!"

"If that is all," said Madeleine, jumping off her platform, "do not let that hinder you, Madame Vincent!"

When the Chevalier and the Abbé came home it was their turn to admire the little wonder, who liked herself uncommonly in her amazing finery, and who was very ready to go through all her performances again for their benefit.

The Chevalier offered Mademoiselle de Combreval his hand to lead her to the dining-room, with a flourish as though he were about to dance a minuet in the ball-room at Versailles before the King and Queen, and at the same time he was racking his brains for metaphors and

comparisons culled from mythology, which he strewed before her little feet.

"Take care," said the Abbé in a low tone to the Chevalier, "you will spoil her!"

"Spoil her! Oh, you know nothing about such matters, Abbé! The education of a woman is only to be achieved by compliments. Tell her she has a pretty figure, and she draws herself up to show it off. Tell her she has a beautiful hand, and she learns to take care of it, to make it worthy of being looked at. Tell her she is clever, and she will improve her intelligence by reading, that she may shine in conversation. Tell her she is full of heart, and she will devote herself to prove to you how well you have read her soul. Pay her compliments, and again, I say, pay her compliments. Some good will be sure to come of it!"

The meal was a cheerful one. The Abbé had that very morning received a present of some wine which his sister, an old maid who had remained in France, had with the greatest difficulty succeeded in transmitting to him. The first bottle was opened; they drank confusion to the Republic, one and indivisible, to the health of the Royal prisoners in the Temple and his Majesty Louis XVII. The last toast was drunk standing.

After supper Mademoiselle de Combreval made her curtsey and withdrew, followed by Dominique. He went upstairs behind her, and she knew that he was gloomy and a little jealous; this was the first day for a long time that he had spent apart from Madeleine. On reaching the landing she turned round and said to him, in her sweet, coaxing, child's voice which had no fashionable coolness in it now :

"Dominique, come into my room a little while; I have not seen you all day."

And the young girl led him in, though he hung back, and looked awkward.

The little room was neat and pretty. It was fragrant with youth, redolent of innocence. Near the window was an old arm-chair, so wide that they could both sit in it, Madeleine half lying on her companion's shoulder so that he could smell all the superfine odours with which the little hairdresser from Frith Street had scented her hair. She said nothing, but she laid her little hand in his broad, brown palm, and looking through the open window they gazed together at the jagged roofs and endless

chimneys which stood out against the starry June night. From the houses in the neighbourhood came up sounds of glasses, laughter, and singing.

"Now I must go to bed, I am so tired! Kiss me—good night!"

Whereupon Dominique scrambled up to his cell with a step as light as his heart.

In the parlour the evening was a cheerful one. Peggy, having cleared the table, covered it with a green cloth and placed two candlesticks of plated ware. This was the regular signal for beginning a game of *tré-sept* or hombre, unless they happened to prefer reversi or backgammon. At midnight each one took his bedroom candle and went to his room. A few minutes later every one was asleep in the little house in Dean Street, and perhaps in all Soho, excepting the Abbé de Marsillac who had re-lighted his lamp, and was at work on his "History of the Kingdom of Cappadocia."

* * *

One morning in that week Madeleine saw a lady come into the shop whose manners surprised her greatly. She was simply, not to say poorly, dressed, and carried a bundle in her hand; still she had a grand manner, and Peggy curtsied low as she admitted her. She was shown into the little first-floor room, where she dropped into an arm-chair, while Madame Vincent stood respectfully, awaiting her pleasure.

"There, my good Vincent," said she, "I have brought home the work. I hope it will be all right."

"Not a doubt of it, Madame la Comtesse."

The lady's eyes fell on Madeleine.

"Who is this little pet? Come here and be looked at. How old are you, child?"

"I am thirteen, Madame," said Madeleine colouring.

"She is really not amiss! Is this another of your nieces, Vincent?"

"No, Madame la Comtesse, she is——"

But the Comtesse interrupted her.

"By the way, I no longer need any needlework. Keep it for other women of quality who may be in the same necessity. Pope, the jeweller

who buys our diamonds, has found a dealer who is willing to take our paintings. Lids of boxes, you know, and the usual subjects; my husband is painting me as Diana, and I am painting him as the God of War—Good Heavens! Who would ever have said that a day would come when we should live by the work of our hands, and that the Comte would fall in love with me!"

"Was he not in love with you before?"

"With me! He had never looked at me. Now he makes hot love to me, I put him in a fury and it amuses me vastly. Oh! we are by no means the worst off. Thanks to that rascal Jean-Jacques, who put it into our parents' heads to have us all taught trades, we shall not die of hunger. M. de Caumont binds books; M. de Fayen is a dancing-master; Chavannes sells charcoal, and de Brécy mixes salads. My mother makes a penny an hour by tatting. She takes it to the Duchess of Buckingham's sale-rooms. You must bear sixteen quarterings to be admitted to work there; it is like a German Chapter. No, no, we are not the most to be pitied, but those who remained behind."

And as she spoke she crushed up a news-letter she held.

"Still such bad news?" asked Madame Vincent.

"Oh, that infernal machine is still at work! This morning, at the head of the list, the Marquis and Marquise de Combreval."

She was going on with the list of names—A scream made her pause. Madeleine had fallen senseless to the floor.

***

Several months have elapsed since that dreadful day.

Madeleine is in mourning. She looks taller and paler. Her small head, and delicate, sprightly features have a pathetic look. Her eyes always ready to fill with tears, her arms hanging listlessly by her side, her brow bent under the weight of melancholy thoughts, all betray the cruel grief of an orphan. She is Madame Vincent's apprentice, but it will be long before she makes a good workwoman. Dominique feels quite furious as he sees her little fingers all black and pricked by her needle. He

longs to make her give up this graceless toil, but she persists. One day when he gently reproaches her, she replies :

"You all speak of the Revolution as you speak of the rain. To listen to these ladies you would fancy that they had been overtaken by a storm, and had found shelter under the trees only to wait till it clears, and to go home again. But who can tell whether the Revolution will come to an end, and whether we shall ever recover our estates! And if we do not, Dominique? Then we must work in good earnest. I will learn to be a dressmaker, and then when I am grown up I will marry you."

Dominique turned scarlet.

"Do not be vexed," says she, "I was only in fun. I know that it is impossible, as well as you do. But never mind, you see that anyhow I must be able to earn a livelihood."

Dominique, for his part, had tried various trades without sticking to any one, for his temper was independent and he sought high wages. He was generally employed in running errands for a tailor in the neighbourhood, a Frenchman too. In going to and fro he had learned English. He had indeed learned much besides, for the Abbé, who had taken a great fancy to him, lent him books, and as Dominique's handwriting had improved he employed him to copy the famous "History of the Kingdom of Cappadocia."

The winter had come and gone; it was summer again, and Dominique, whose voice had turned to a manly bass, was still in quest of the trade that should make him rich. It was the Chevalier's fête-day. Madame Vincent could not think of any little dainty to set before her favourite boarder, and Dominique came to the rescue.

"What do you say to a dish of *feuillantines?* My mother made them to perfection; she had a recipe of her own, and I have often seen her make them. Supposing I were to try?"

"And what are *feuillantines,* my boy?"

"A delicious sort of puff. At home, at Combreval, every one liked them."

Flour, butter, and eggs were provided for Dominique's experiment. At

supper the puffs were quite a triumph. The Chevalier, who liked nice things, hugged Dominique.

"What, lad, you have such a gift as this and never before told us? Why, you have only to make such cakes as these for the English, and your fortune is made."

"I will try to-morrow," said the boy.

And the very next day Dominique was to be seen carrying on his head a shallow wicker basket full of his puffs, and making his way among the numerous hucksters in the streets, mingling his cry with the familiar cries of a great city : "French cakes! French cakes! A farthing apiece!"

The young pastrycook's good looks and foreign accent, and the tempting appearance of his wares, crisp, fragrant, and golden, attracted buyers. He went wherever loiterers were to be found, and as he went he was at once amused and edified by the sights in the streets. Chance led him more than once to witness a duel in Park Lane. More than once he caught sight of Mr. Pitt, a pale man with his nose in the air, dressed in black like a lawyer, as he sprang out of his carriage at the door of the palace, and flew up the steps, three at a time.

Once, in Saint James's Street, he saw Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke in person, standing in front of Miss Humphrey's shop, and laughing as heartily as the crowd at a caricature of themselves; and on the Mall he would look at the officers on half-pay, tracing lines in the gravel with the end of their canes, and retaking with bloodless triumph all the places conquered by Pichegru.

And through all this throng Dominique made his way crying : "French cakes! A farthing apiece!"

At the end of the day Dominique went home with an empty basket and well-filled purse. Before long he was rich enough to pay Madame Vincent, not only for his board, but for Madeleine's also, with arrears. For a long time the milliner refused to take it.

"I am glad to help people," she said.

"Mademoiselle de Combreval," said Dominique drily, "can be under no obligations to any one."

One evening Dominique found Peggy in tears. Madame Vincent was gone to bed; she had had a violent fit of hysterics. What had happened?

"It seems," sobbed Peggy, "that M. Boche was a republican spy, an enemy of the King and of everybody."

"M. Boche! What nonsense!"

"It is not nonsense; M. le Chevalier found out all about it. And mistress was so miserable! The gentlemen wanted to turn out M. Boche, but M. Boche went away of his own accord; he knew he could not stay here."

The explanation given by Madame Vincent was not much more satisfactory.

"Who could have thought it of M. Boche!" cried she lamenting. "A man I have made so much of these ten years past! A man I was within an ace of marrying! A man to whom I sacrificed a spotless reputation!"

Finally, Dominique learnt from Madeleine that a quarrel had arisen at table. The Chevalier, annoyed by the progress of the Republic in Germany, had drunk to the discomfiture of Hoche and Moreau, and M. Boche, suddenly taking up a tone which was new to them all, had refused to drink the toast.

"You, gentlemen, are free to drink to the disgrace of your country; but when you pledge me to such a sentiment you must excuse me if I let my glass stand!"

"Ah! Monsieur Boche, then this is the secret! You are a revolutionary in disguise! At last you stand confessed! And we who have always spoken freely in your presence! But now I remember a recent paper mentioned the fact that the committees of the Convention were kept constantly informed of the movements of the new expedition fitting out to attack the Brittany coast, and I recollect that I myself, at this very table, told you all—Pray, Monsieur Boche, was it you who gave our enemies such exact information?"

From suspicion to accusation, and from accusation without evidence to condemnation without appeal, the angry Chevalier had leaped with a

bound; he would hear neither protestations nor vows from the unfortunate Boche.

"Madame Vincent, henceforth we decline to eat with a traitor! Do what you please in the matter. For my part I am going this instant to warn the English Ministry!"

The threat, whether or no a vain one, was enough to terrify a hapless wretch such as Boche, however clear his conscience might be; for this reason he had departed in hot haste, in spite of Madeleine's efforts to detain him on one hand, and on the other to mollify his accuser, taking with him all his little possessions—a very modest bundle, and telling no one whither he was bound.

From that day forth, whenever M. Boche was mentioned, Madame Vincent would heave a sigh, and Peggy never alluded to the dreadful event—the hegira of M. Boche—but with bated breath. When she wanted to fix a date she would say, opening her round eyes : "It was a little while before the discovery of M. Boche's wickedness;" or : "It was a few days after the spy went off." That eventful day was as important in their domestic annals as the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot is in the history of England.

Though grieving greatly, Dominique moved down into his old friend's room. He was now always called M. Dominique, and he began to enjoy the consideration which is paid all the world over to those, however young, who can earn money on their own account.

One afternoon it happened that, through the carelessness of the driver, the wheel of a truck crushed Dominique's foot. The pain was severe; however, he managed to drag himself home, and next day, with his foot clumsily bandaged, he was bent on going his round as usual. Oh, but Madeleine was angry in good earnest! She put on her most commanding air, and desired Dominique to go to bed again. A few days after he managed to hobble down to the kitchen, and made some pastry; Madeleine allowed him to do it; then, when the basket was ready, she said very positively :

"I am going out to sell the cakes."

"You, Mademoiselle Madeleine!"

"In the first place I will not have you call me Mademoiselle. We are both poor and both orphans. The only difference between us is that you are strong and clever, while I am feeble and clumsy. But look here, Dominique, I mean to earn something too. And I am going out to sell the puffs."

Dominique understood that she must have her way.

Out she went, and in about two hours returned with an empty basket. How she did it I cannot tell, but in point of fact she sold three times as many cakes as Dominique. The brave youth engaged a scullion, and rented a kitchen to have more room to work in. He could never go out now; it was as much as he could do to make puffs fast enough for the miraculous consumption.

Of an evening, after dinner, she would make her way with a fresh batch of cakes to Kensington Gardens, and stand at one of the gates with her wicker tray hung round her neck by a strap, and another about her waist. Her frock was striped green and white, and made in the fashion of the day; she wore a lace kerchief, and either a mob cap or a broad Pamela hat on her fair hair. "A Greuze!" cried the Chevalier, the first time he saw her thus arrayed and ready to start. There she stood at the gate of the Gardens, inviting the passers-by to purchase by her looks rather than by her words.

It was the fashion then for the best, as also for the worst, company to take an airing in the evening, loitering up and down the old avenues of Kensington, and when the weather was really fine it was a very pretty scene. Groups collected about the Round Pond, some standing to chat, others sitting or lying on the grass. Happy couples would wander up and down in the twilight of the shade. The men, in their many-coloured garments, close-fitting tights, preposterous shirt-frills, and long whisking coat-tails, were for all the world like parrots. The women, with their hair curled low over their foreheads, ears, and cheeks, suggested poodles. With bare arms and throats, their waists close under their chins, and their short skirts, they concealed their faces and displayed everything else. They talked so fast and laughed so loud that they might have been taken for crazy creatures, half-tipsy with pleasure and flirtation.



Each age has its own ideal of woman; and woman, a facile, pliant creature, moulds herself, body and soul, to meet that ideal. This was not a time of languid graces, melancholy sweetness, and pathetic blushes; it was the reign of high-spirits and audacity.

The pretty cake-seller was very soon an object of attention. Then her name became known, and she was more interesting than ever. To crunch a puff and exchange a few words with the "little Marquise" became a daily necessity alike to *beaux* and to fine ladies. Instead of the pressing ways of an ordinary pedlar, Madeleine had a little haughty air with her which bewitched her customers; she sold her cakes as though she were distributing favours. One fine day, when she was very busy, the Duchess of Rutland begged to be allowed to help her, and then ladies vied with each other in copying the whim. Next evening Lady Georgina Gordon made her appearance, dressed exactly like Madeleine herself, and insisted on taking her turn at carrying the basket. The little cake-seller was so beset that humble folk came forward with timid agitation, holding a penny very tight in the palm of their hand, for it need hardly be said that the price went up as the seller became the fashion. In a month Dominique had saved above a hundred pistoles.

At nightfall he always came to fetch Madeleine home; they would walk back along Knightsbridge, at that hour as noisy as a village fair, and by Piccadilly, where carriages, sedan chairs, and ladies and gentlemen on horseback moved in a ceaseless tide. Dominique, as was his way, would walk on in silence; Madeleine, fairly tired out, would lean on her companion's arm, dreaming of all she had seen and heard during the day.

One evening, on joining her, Dominique found her strangely excited, her ears were crimson, her eyes were restless and had the moist and twinkling glitter of stars after rain.

"Madeleine, what is the matter? Something has happened, some one has said something to you."

"Nothing at all, Dominique, I assure you."

Dominique did not insist, but he was very grave as they walked on a few steps.

"Listen," said she, "I cannot bear to have any secrets from you; but promise me not to be angry."

He promised.

Then she drew a letter out of her bodice, and held it out to him. It was a love-letter; four pages of bad French, written in a close, small hand.

"Who gave you this!"

"A young man."

"But how?"

"In the simplest way in the world. He slipped it into my hand with a penny as he paid for his cake."

"And you took it? You kept it?"

"Dominique, you promised you would not be angry."

"I am not angry; only I am surprised—And you have read this letter?"

"Is it a great crime to read a love-letter?"

And without waiting for his reply she went on lightly :

"Good Heavens! What a strange thing it seems to reflect that some one loves me. I am no longer a child."

"Alas! No, indeed."

"This is the first time! You love me, I know, and my poor parents too—they loved me, and my good nurse, and uncle de Sauves, and Madame Vincent, and Peggy—But he—he is in love with me!"

She spoke so gently and so low that it gave Dominique a sort of shudder. In a minute he spoke again :

"This is a stupid letter, the man who wrote it is not dangerous. But there will be others, and I am afraid."

"What is there to be afraid of in any one who loves me? We do no harm to those whom we love. For my part I am afraid of nothing but Republicans and robbers."

"There are men who would rob you of your honour, Madeleine."

"I do not understand."

"You do not know that in this great city, where we live, young girls sometimes disappear. They are carried off by wretches, gagged, and

pushed into a carriage which goes off at full gallop. They are taken to some little country house called Somebody's Folly, and which deserves a worse name, for crimes and not follies are committed there. And when they find their way home again, they are crushed, and wretched, and ruined for ever."

"You terrify me. Well then, I will never come to Kensington again without Peggy or Madame Vincent; will that satisfy you?"

"Yes."

"And now that we are so rich we must take a holiday; we will go into the country together."

Dominique had recovered his good humour; he tore up the letter into minute scraps and flung them to the winds. The lover, who was following them at a short distance, saw the treatment his effusion received, the laboured outcome of a week's sleepless nights, and turned on his heel with a sigh.

Next morning Dominique and Madeleine made their way across the fields south-west of the Green Park, where now stands the wealthy quarter known as Belgravia. They were on their way to Chelsea, formerly called the Village of Palaces. Madeleine had donned her smartest frock; Dominique was not in the least awkward in the plain dress which was fast becoming customary for all classes alike. They went along the historical strand of Cheyne Walk, and turned into a tavern. The sign of the house was the Nell Gwynne; a hundred years before, Charles the Second's capricious mistress had resided there. But what did Madeleine and Dominique care for these traditions of the gallantries of a past age? They seated themselves in a trellised arbour whence, through a gap cut in the greenery, they looked out on a plot where army pensioners were playing at bowls, under trees half-dead of old age. Beyond, the full tide of the river was crowded with yawls and wherries; and on the further shore lay the shade of the trees planted by Bolingbroke to make a park. Madeleine, long confined among fog and smoke, drew long breaths of the fresh air of the river, and the country odours wafted from the opposite shore.

When they had dined, an old ferryman, who smiled as he watched them, pulled them across the river. Madeleine gathered flowers in the

meadow till she was tired. Her eyes sparkled, and her cheeks were bright with colour; she clung gaily to big Dominique who was always grave and unbending. They wandered on where chance might lead them, resting now and then. Lying on their backs, all round them they could see nothing but a narrow horizon of waving grass stems, and overhead the infinite, serenely blue; while the shout of a child in the distance, the trot of a horse, the jolting of a cart, the crack of a whip, amply filled the peaceful void. When the sun was near setting they slowly made their way down to the river again.

"Supposing we go back by water?" said Madeleine.

Dominique hailed a boat which pulled to land, and they got into it. Hitherto she had chattered incessantly; now, whether she were weary or lost in thought, she scarcely spoke at all. She sat at the bottom of the boat, her lap full of flowers, and, laying her head on a cushion, seemed to sleep. Dominique could not take his eyes off the sweet face, the light curls fanned by the breeze, the white neck, the girlish figure under the lace kerchief. Even through her closed eyelids she felt the glow of his gaze, and an undefined emotion, such as she had first felt on reading her first love-letter the day before, possessed her wholly, and throbbed in every pulse.

"Here we are at Hungerford stairs," said Dominique. "We land here."

"Already!" said Madeleine, as she rose.

Her eyes met Dominique's and fell. He offered her his hand to help her, and she hesitated to take the hand for which, as a child, she had so often held hers out. She was full of a strange, delightful bashfulness, as though Dominique were some one else, or some new strange thing had come between them. They supped at a tavern in the Strand, and by the time they reached the little house in Dean Street every one was in bed. As they parted, Dominique said to the young girl, as usual :

"Good night, Madeleine. Sleep well!"

Now, hitherto she had always addressed him with the familiar *thou*. To-night, for the first time, she replied :

"And you too, Dominique."



This *you* went to the lad's heart. He sat till day broke, his elbows on the table, his head in his hands, meditating on that cruel *you*. Oh, love is a dullard!

Dominique rose later than usual next morning, and when he went downstairs he heard the sharp voice of a stranger giving orders in the kitchen in a domineering tone and a mixed jargon of English, French, and German.

"Madame la Chanoinesse must have her coffee very hot, and the milk too. Madame la Chanoinesse generally eats rolls and butter, but she will put up with toast for to-day. And where is the honey? What, no honey! You seem to have nothing in this place!"

Dominique, entering the room, saw a long, narrow, shrivelled face, which well matched the voice. Peggy informed him, in a brief aside, that this was no less a person than Mademoiselle Dorothée, companion and confidential woman to Madame la Chanoinesse de Combreval, who had arrived the evening before to assume the care of her niece. Madeleine was in fact aware that a sister of her father's was attached to a foundation in Germany, but, being very ignorant of geography, she had, no doubt, been in some confusion as to where exactly her aunt dwelt, for two letters she had addressed to her from London had remained unanswered.

The Chanoinesse, on her part, had made active enquiries, and had at last determined to undertake the journey to England. The reader probably does not care to follow her in her adventures. Mademoiselle Dorothée thought proper to recite the tale to Peggy, who did not understand a word of it, and to Dominique, who listened in silence.

At dinner time, the lady herself appeared on the scene, accompanied by Madeleine, whose eyes were very red. She accepted the civility of the Abbé and the Chevalier with great dignity.

"Is that the lad of whom you spoke?" she asked, gazing at Dominique.

"Yes, aunt." And, as she spoke, Madeleine took him by the arm and led him forward :

"This is Dominique, my foster-brother."

"Not a bad-looking fellow for a man of that class. I hear you have behaved very well to your young mistress and have taken faithful care of her. That is well, very well. Make your mind easy; the Combrevals will reward you duly when matters get straight again. Now I have seen you, you may go downstairs. You will make acquaintance with my woman."

"But, aunt, Dominique, you see——"

"Ah, he waits at table?"

Madeleine blushed to her very ears.

"Dominique has always been used to dine with us," she said.

"Indeed!" said the old lady in icy tones; and she added, as if speaking to herself :

"It is amazing how these new ideas have gained ground, even among those of the good old sort!"

It may be imagined that for that evening the dandies and epicures of Kensington waited in vain, as they had the evening before, for the little cake-seller; Madeleine, for her part, had to sit through a long sermon.

"You must perfectly understand, my dear child," said the Chanoinesse, "that your intimacy with this young pastrycook must come to an end. It is high time that you should resume the habits and connections that befit your rank. I have an income of four thousand francs, safe out of reach of these Jacobin gentry; it is little enough, to be sure, but among these poor exiles, destitute of everything, it is a fortune. Two women can live upon it in respectable comfort till better times return. To-morrow, Dorothée, who is a very competent person, will look for some decent house. Master Dominique may follow us, if he chooses to learn his place, in the kitchen or hall; otherwise it will be better for all parties that he should seek his fortune elsewhere."

Madeleine shed many tears that night; but of that Dominique knew nothing.

At daybreak next morning he went out of the house, and wandered about the London streets for some hours. A gazette was being cried, and he bought a paper. The victories of the French were reported with

envious indignation. He noted a passage where an account was given of the frantically zealous volunteers who, in the course of two or three campaigns, rose to the highest ranks; one especially was mentioned who in the spring had been no more than a major, and by the autumn was a general in command. And where the English reporter found matter for scornful comments, Dominique saw a theme for day-dreams and admiration.

Wandering hap-hazard he had reached Marylebone Gardens, a resort of elegance and pleasure about half a century before. Deserted now, neglected and melancholy, new rows of streets were on all sides invading and encroaching on them. In front of him Dominique saw an old gentleman who was slowly pacing the path, rapping his cane on the ground at regular intervals.

"If I am not greatly mistaken," thought the lad, "I ought to know that back."

And when the old man had reached the end of the walk and turned about, they both exclaimed on recognizing each other.

"Dominique!"

"Monsieur Boche!"

"The very same, my boy. Only, as you see, I wear my own hair; that is since Mr. Pitt put a tax on powder."

"How glad I am to see you again, Monsieur Boche!"

"You never believed——?"

"I? Never! But what could I say or do? I am but a lad, they would not have listened to me. Tell me, Monsieur Boche, what became of you after that miserable quarrel?"

"My child, I have gone through some sad times," replied M. Boche, taking a pinch of snuff. "The most enviable of mortals, it seems to me, is an old bachelor petted by a widow. I enjoyed that happiness, and I lost it—But let us drop that; a philosopher ought to be superior to all disasters. Give me the news from Dean Street, and tell me all that has happened there during these two months past."

"It is my turn now to go into exile," said Dominique.

He gave the old man a sketch of what had taken place, and of the

trouble which had been suddenly brought into Madeleine's life and his own by the unexpected arrival of her aunt.

"And what do you mean to do?"

"To go back to France, and enlist in the first regiment marching to the frontier."

"Well said, young man!" cried M. Boche, with flashing eyes. "Ah! if I were but thirty years younger! You—you are young, you will see great things, nay, perhaps you will do them! You are a child of the century that is dawning on us, ours is in its death throes. But men will live to regret it, Dominique. Mark my words, they will regret the eighteenth century."

M. Boche insisted on taking Dominique to breakfast with him; and then the old man and the lad parted affectionately.

"God guide you, my boy! By God I mean that primitive essence, that Supreme Being whom philosophers——"

"Why correct yourself, Monsieur Boche?" said Dominique. "God, to me, is He to whom we used to pray in church, Our Father who is in Heaven, and who gives us our daily bread."

"And He is mine too," said M. Boche, very humbly.

He spoke the words in a low voice, and as if he were ashamed of them, for it is not without a painful effort that a man who has fed his soul on the Encyclopædia for forty years confesses his belief in God like any common Christian.

Mademoiselle de Combreval received a little note dated from Dover, and in these words :

"Madeleine, you have found a relation. Your future life is provided for, and you no longer need me. I am going far away, for I can no longer live with you. I have no right to tell you what suffering it is to me, and you will never guess it. Farewell.

"DOMINIQUE."

* * *

Six or seven years later, a post-chaise drew up at the door of Malmaison. In it were an old lady and a young girl, in all the brilliant


FRANÇOIS - FLAMENG -

beauty of twenty. Beauty had never altogether lost its prerogatives, and birth was beginning to recover its prestige. It was easy to recognize the ladies as *ci-devant* aristocrats, and the new Government, it was said, was trying to pay court to the *ci-devants*. So the Consul's grenadiers on sentry at the gate let the chaise drive in. The ushers in the great hall, however, were less inclined to be civil.

"What do you want, Madame?"

"To see the First Consul."

"The citizen First Consul sees no one. You must apply at the Tuileries, write to M. de Bourienne to fix an audience."

"I did so, and got no answer. And yet——"

But here an unexpected incident changed the aspect of affairs. To the right, in a large hall with open doors, two or three officers, blazing with gold lace, were walking up and down to the martial clatter of their swords.

Suddenly one of them came forward to meet the ladies at the door. He was a handsome young man, and wore the splendid uniform of the Consular Artillery Guard with grace and distinction.

The old lady made her very best curtsey. As to the younger one, no sooner had she set eyes on him than she held out both hands with an eager gesture, exclaiming :

"Dominique!"

A few minutes later he had led Madeleine and her aunt into a large room or corridor with windows on each side. The walls and ceiling were hung with blue and white striped canvas imitating a camp tent. There were no decorations but trophies of arms; the tables, chairs, and candelabra were all in the Roman taste. In the midst of this severely handsome scene stood the man whom no one describes now, because every one knows exactly how he looked at every period of his life, and through all his various transformations.

He was in his favourite attitude, one hand in his waistcoat, the other behind his back. He was the hero of Marengo now, no longer the hero of Arcola, not yet the hero of Austerlitz; his olive complexion was only just beginning to lose its pallor. There was something so dazzling in the

man, such a radiance of individuality and genius, that the Chanoinesse looked down, as those who pour contempt on him now, his petty-minded biographers would have done in her place, finding themselves suddenly face to face with this unmatched mortal, incomprehensible to history, this dwarf who was a giant.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Citizen First Consul," stammered the old lady, "Mademoiselle de Combreval, whose parents perished on the scaffold, petitions you of your clemency, of your justice, to grant that her name may be erased from the list of exiles."

"Granted."

"And to be re-instated in her estates which were confiscated."

"Her estates! That is what you all want. Her estates! It is very easily said. But what am I to do with those who have bought them of the nation, or of the first purchasers? Who is to indemnify them? Who is to repay them? Is my justice to allow them to suffer?"

"Still our rights——"

"Your rights! The old rights have ceased to exist. Everything has been upset. There are no rights but those that date from to-day. Colonel, do you know these ladies?"

"I am Mademoiselle de Combreval's foster-brother."

"Her foster-brother? And nothing more?"

A sly smile, thoroughly Italian, just curled the First Consul's upper lip.

"Come, come, you both colour. Very good. Madame, on the day when your niece marries the Colonel, she will find in her *corbeille* the title-deeds, not indeed of Combreval, but of an estate of equal value, provided by the enemies of France—And you, Mademoiselle, remember I need soldiers!"

At the Peace of Amiens the young couple at once paid a visit to England. They found Madame Vincent very prosperous and quite young again. She was now Madame Boche. The Chevalier had died with his century, on the 31st of December, 1800. As for the Abbé, he was further than ever from writing the word *finis* to the "History of the Kingdom of Cappadocia," which indeed has never seen the light. Dominique and

Madeleine went to see the gate of Kensington Gardens where the little cake-seller had been the rage, and the Nell Gwynne tavern, glorified by the sweetest memory of their youth; and again clinging to each other they retraced the narrow paths where they then had wandered, he bashful and she speechless, both tremulous with love.

The Empire endowed Dominique with the title of Comte, at the Restoration he was made Marquis. I have not told you his surname, leaving it to you to seek it among the long list of glorious names which cover the walls of Versailles and the Arc de Triomphe.

Dominique and Madeleine lived to our own day the objects of tender devotion to succeeding generations. Seated on each side of a wide old hearth-place, they would look at each other with still youthful and loving eyes, and talk over the past.

"To think," the veteran would sometimes say, "that I was ever a pastrycook!"

"And I," the dowager would reply, "to think that I was a doll!"

AUGUSTIN FILON.



A GOD OF THE YEAR II

The great combat between Philosophy and the Divinity seemed to be at an end. It had begun with the architects. These out of sheer curiosity wanted to know what was going on in the heavens, and though they were simple-minded at the outset of their career, they were vigorous, and they tried to pile mountains one on another and to build an extraordinary tower. The Titans and the masons of the Tower of Babel having been routed, the philosophers joined in the fray. At last, after a formidable effort, in the eighteenth century, they announced to humanity, some, that God was conquered, others, that He was annihilated, others, again, that He had never existed.

Le bocage était sans mystère, le rossignol était sans voix.

Voltaire and his disciples affirmed that they had thoroughly explored the theological groves, and had left no one hidden there. Diderot and his friends were convinced that they had twisted the neck of the spiritualist nightingale. In point of fact, for the first time in the history of the world, a great civilized people had been given Pure Reason as a political and social law, destined to take the place of all beliefs, and to dominate everything, ideas, legislation, morals. The principle once established, the philosophers effaced themselves. For philosophers are made to establish principles, but it is the people naturally who must needs apply them. But, in order that the experiment should not end in a fiasco, the

philosophers, before retiring behind the scenes, selected the hardiest of all the peoples, the French nation, and in it the most wideawake, the most emancipated group, the Parisian group, full of light and leading.

So the Parisian people enthusiastically undertook to carry on the philosophic business. They said the thing was all right, that theology was a toothless old woman, and the divinity a cloudy pleasantry which had endured too long. They went furiously to work and—— rebuilt Olympus.

The history of these building operations would be a merry tale if the noise that accompanied them had not shewn a constant lack of melody, and if there had not been so many stabs dealt during the process. The people built their Olympus like the castors that are introduced into places where water is scarce, and that persist in raising embankments which only shut out the wind. The society of the new gods was thus a little mixed. It was recruited in divers fashions. It was generally necessary to have been assassinated at the proper moment by somebody who shouted : "Down with the Republic!" The assembly, for that matter, soon completed its numbers. There were all sorts there : gods, great and small, and goddesses. We pass over the *Dii Minores :* Le Peletier, Beauvais, Beaurepaire, Barat, Viala, Châlier, Moulins, Grammont, Lazowski, Passavant, and the rest.

There were two goddesses, Nature and the Aubry woman. Nature was the rosy-fingered goddess who opened the door of the States-General. Her cult was more irritating than vicious. She required you to shed "delicious tears" at every street corner. She was prodigal of solemn, august, and venerable adjectives; and for ritual she turned out an almanack wherein "radish" was substituted for "Paradise." Her mission seemed to be to create a belief in the candour of Némorin and in the cleanliness of Estelle. This was not enough. They got rid of her in symbolizing her by an immense statue which displayed great breasts of stone.

The other goddess, the Aubry woman, was remarkable for the same attributes, only they were not said to be of stone, nor her heart either. She was a fine woman, built like a grenadier, and with a grenadier's tastes. She had even scandalized the retreats where base aristocrats, a disgrace to the nobility, trained up young goddesses for the Jacobins.

She was the triple Hecate. She had three heads; her own, of course, the Maillard's, and Sophie Momoro's. The Maillard and the Momoro gave Aubry a helping hand, when she was tired of playing goddess of Reason.

The greater gods also formed a trinity. One was Brutus, this was the National Guard god. He was a favourite of La Fayette and his *plats bleus qui sont neufs, qui n'vont pas au feu,"* as the festive ditty had it. He also was a god of the parliamentary dawn. There was not much harm in him, and he was content with baptising many children.

The second in order of importance was the "Supreme Being." He began by massacring every one, Père Duchesne, Chaumette, and Cloots, the Prussian, his own particular enemies, then his own father, Robespierre. After this he let himself be won to gentler counsels by Barras, and garlanded with flowers by La Réveillière who exhibited him to the yelling market-women. This Jupiter, too fluent a rhetorician, irritated the practical temper of Napoleon, who sent him to console and absolve the impenitent heroes of the Terror.

Now for the Deus Maximus Marat. He alone gets our homage nowadays. He is, in fact, an enigma for history, as well as for philosophy. Not a childish enigma, like the affair of the sham Demetrius or of the Iron Mask, of which the explanation has only an interest for curiosity-mongers; but an enigma which touches the very roots of the human soul and of the history of the Revolution.

Here, indeed, is a personage who, following the logical course of things, was destined, after being drenched with pailfuls of iced water, to play Tabarin on the Pont-Neuf. At the same instant one notices a remarkably powerful effort of scepticism which seems to have brought about the annihilation of the whole supernatural order. How was it that after the Encyclopædia, after Voltaire, after Diderot, how was it that this personage became a god with a regular worship? How did this worship come to be continued after the establishment of the reign of Reason? What sort of man then was he in reality? What was the worship like?

Mercier says that the number of busts of Marat was equal to that of the heads he wanted to cut off. He had started with five hundred, and

was close on three hundred thousand, when Charlotte Corday put an end to these joyous freaks of his imagination. The total makes up a respectable sculpture gallery. If we suppose, as is probable, that the engravings of his head were more numerous still, we can understand how embarrassed the historian is to give the real portrait of the man.

All the same the countenance can be pretty well made out from the mass of portraits which nearly all, whether they attempt it or not, reveal the four characteristic features : the forehead, rapidly retreating, and, as it were, divided into two storeys at the level of the hard, strong, eye-brow line; underneath that, gleaming eyes, with an expression of wildness, a vaguely-outlined mouth, wide open, with heavy jaw, one of the most repulsive that has ever been painted; a prominent chin, heavy, fleshy, and, in its hideousness, the only decent, or almost decent thing, in this revolting mask, because it tells of nothing more than obstinacy, which is not always a defect. Studying this face with the aid of the rules laid down by physiognomists, you detect the characteristics of impotence arising from baseness, and a mixture of pig-headedness with weakness, above all that extreme vanity which is the mark of nearly all the great men of this period. In this case vanity has a special shade. It is not feminine and passive like Pétion's, childish and intermittent like Desmoulins', masculine with the lassitude that follows debauch like Danton's, active and timid like Robespierre's, it is active and shameless like the monomaniacs'.

Add to the general features of this face sickly-looking eyes, overspread it with a complexion at once dirty and livid, put in the middle a ridiculous pug nose which reminds one of his admirers of Attila. But, at a time when natural history was the great store-house of rhetorical images, he was, above all, compared to the hyena. I am bound to declare that I have not found in the man's face the expression of cowardice which distinguishes that animal. Otherwise the comparison is an ingenious one. It went so far as an analogy of smell. Marat exhaled that corpse-like odour which announces the approach of the wild beast. The cause was natural enough; Marat was rotten to the core. The poor creature was not more lucky in the rest of his body than in his face. That

little dwarf's bust, surmounted by an enormous head, as they picture to us some of the Court buffoons in the sixteenth century, was decomposing, the result of a terrible and shameful malady, we are told. His skin was disappearing in scales of putrid and naturally offensive flesh. As a consequence, doubtless, of this malady, perhaps by natural bent, or maybe by policy, to be all the more agreeable to his mud-bespattered devotees, he had acquired a taste for uncleanliness.

A dirty handkerchief on his head, big boots worn out at the heels on his bare feet, a greasy overcoat which did not conceal a filthy shirt open over a chest covered with sores, a belt grotesquely laden with pistols and daggers, there you have Marat on his way to the Convention, often escorted by a ragged, delirious multitude. He enters, takes his place on a bench far from any neighbour, and falls to scratching himself frenziedly—an exercise which he interrupts only to stretch out a grimy hand to one or two colleagues who hastily get away from him, after saluting the man, I will not say of the people, but of the populace. For his populace that idolized him had entered the Convention when he did, and, like a faithful dog, barked against its master's enemies at his slightest sign.

There, then, you have Marat engaged in the exercise of his august function. You can fancy what he was elsewhere. Posterity must not be deceived by the bath-room in which he met his death. The bath-room was an accident, and the bath a medical remedy.

Let us give the most lively of contemporary portraits; it must not be forgotten that the animal kingdom was all the fashion at this epoch : "A crocodile's mouth covered by an enormous owl's beak; one eye screwed upwards, another screwed downwards, a green skin all in folds over a frog's body."

It was not then his beauty which started Jean Paul on the road to Olympus. Nor was it that either which had started him on the road to the terrestrial honours of popularity and the Convention. It was not his birth. He speaks at every page of his patriotism; every one of his words protests his love for *his country*—he says *his* country—it is only he and the purchasers of the *Ami du Peuple* who love France, *his*



country. He has done everything for her, sacrificed everything. He is ready to give his life for her! What! he has given it a hundred times over. He is assassinated every day. All this for his country.

In point of fact he is a Swiss. The foreigner will often reappear under the patriotic overcoat in which he cloaks himself. He will reappear whenever the nation upon which he has inflicted his filial tenderness will not follow his wildest counsels with docility—will not aid with servile enthusiasm his ambitious designs. "French people, Parisian people, futile, selfish, imbecile, and cowardly by nature!" These cries come from the depth of his versatile Neuchatel heart.

For it was in the Canton of Neuchatel, at Baudry, that he was born. It was impossible, as you can imagine, for Marat not to have had an absolutely exceptional father and mother. He declares that they were quite out of the common.

In one or two of the numerous biographies which he will devote to himself with fervent and unquenchable admiration, he will reveal to us that he was a prodigy from the cradle. At five years old he wanted to be a schoolmaster, at fifteen he had reflected, and detected in himself great aptitude for the professorial career. He thus naïvely unveils his instinctive love for domination over the weak, his passion for dragooning the foolish and punishing the independent. At eighteen he was a profound observer and an author; at twenty a creative genius; lastly, at twenty-one he attained the summit of human nature; he was a thinker. The reality has less of fairyland about it. It is quite true that he early showed himself a *creative genius;* he composed prayers, which he went about reciting from door to door, demanding alms. As he grew up this genius developed. He wrote letters for his neighbours, and compliments, rhymed epistles which he sent to rich persons. He was totally devoid of the instinct of delicacy or modesty, and effrontery seemed to him as much a gift of nature as appetite. He practised begging to the very end of his life, as he did insolence, indifferently as circumstances demanded. Not that he was avaricious. His ambition went much farther than that, for that was his great quality—ambition, unmeasured, inextinguishable ambition; one of the most potent essences of ambition that have ever existed; only

this potent force bore solely upon one miserable point—it was confined to the exaltation of Marat in everything, everywhere, through everything.

This ambition was served by two instruments of an equally tough temper—vanity and tenacity; vanity which pushed his desires to the very top of the social scale, and tenacity which never rested in the pursuit of those desires. As a consequence of this ambition he had one quality —he was constantly faithful to himself and to those who were useful to him. His intellectual baggage was composed solely of the spirit of assimilation to which his vanity gave an appearance of originality. He produced nothing, except after undoing bit by bit the work of others, and putting it together again upside down, so as to give it a new aspect. Thereupon vanity rendered him a second service; it persuaded him that he had made an original discovery, superior to all the great discoveries of humanity. In its turn his tenacity came to his aid, his tenacity which recoiled before no task, however rough it might be, before no probability, no reason, no obvious truth, no established fact. He vaunted the merits of his discovery in the face of every one, until he had conquered admiration or persuaded the people that this admiration was general.

Was he sincere? Doubtless his vanity was, to a certain extent, a guarantee of his sincerity. But we must not trust too much to that. Lying is as agreeable to him as telling the truth is indifferent. Between the two courses he always chooses the more useful. He only appears naïve when transfixed at the grandeur of his own merits. He has none of the flightiness characteristic of monomania. He seems mad only because he is immoderate, and because the violence of his vices and the vigour of his faults put him outside the mass of humanity. But if he abandons himself to these vices and faults, it is not a mere lack of common sense that induces him to do so; he knows that they are useful to him, he exploits them even while humouring them. He trades on them. He is envious and full of hatred; furious and ferocious. He is glad to be able to abandon himself to his instincts, but he knows, too, that the abandonment is to his own advantage; that in showing them off he augments his power and his renown. One day—speaking of Robespierre —he lets fall a few words that light up his whole life and cannot but

be of service to all among his biographers who wish to see to the very bottom of his life and of his soul. "You are to understand that my hold on the people has nothing to do with my ideas; it comes from my audacity, from my impetuous, emotional outbursts, my shrieks of rage, fury, and despair." Every word in this sentence should be noted and applied to each of the acts that apparently were the maddest in his existence. Thus we are shewn as a proof of his madness that ladder of cruelty which he ascends, when, starting with five hundred heads which he wanted to cut off at the outset of his political career, he arrives at a claim of two hundred and seventy thousand. But he knew very well what he was about. No doubt he would have been glad to be able to suppress everything in France that pointed to any sort of intellectual, social, or even physical superiority; everything, in fact, that was in any way capable of exciting the jealousy of Marat. But, above all, he perceived that by starting with the demand for five hundred heads he at once attracted public attention, that by asking for ten thousand he delighted his populace, and that by asking for three hundred thousand he satisfied and subjugated it.

He knocked the handle off his style as he had taken the joints out of his ideas. Before the Revolution he had acquired a phraseology of decent mediocrity. He had attained the level of the minor writers of the time. His sentences were clear, easy, fairly firm, full of thought and, now and then, of real value. He changes all that on entering upon journalism, and knocks together the style which, while all the time the resultant of his defects, was still very appropriate to his ambitious aims. He arranged for himself a mixture of chatter and epilepsy which was thoroughly understood by his people, and exercised an irresistible power over them. To us, this jerky gossip, punctuated by curious shrieks, fierce threats, detailed denunciations, and personal attacks, interspersed with groans, and watered by the tears shed for the misery of the people, gossip clumsily stuffed with protestations of unalterable devotion, appears monotonous and grotesque. It is so in reality, but it carried away the rabble of male and female *sans-culottes,* the female especially, the most energetic of them as well as the most degraded.

We begin to have a glimpse of the answer to the riddle. How did this abortion, this *excrément de nature,* as they called him, despised, ridiculous, repulsive, hateful, of mediocre intelligence, vile in soul, without eloquence, without style, with no other strength than that of his vices, how did he come to dominate France, and then to be the object of its adoration? The answer is that his vices came at the right moment and that, guided by the ambition and aided by the vanity and tenacity we have spoken of, he had the skill to apply them and to maintain them at the precise pitch at which they might produce their greatest effect.

Proximus ardet Ucalegon. He saw that the volcano was on fire. He did not foresee that it would burn for so long, but he divined that, after having roasted the most eager of the bystanders, it would bring into the light of day the very bottom of the gulf, mud, cinders, scoriæ and all. Besides, the baseness and effrontery of his sentiments drew him on. While the earlier leaders of the Revolution spoke to the *bourgeoisie,* while the others harangued the people, he addressed himself from the first to the populace. He threw himself into its arms. He began by seducing it, appealing to the virtues it really possesses. His appeal was loudest to the most touching of all of them, to the delirious enthusiasm the populace shows for those who abase themselves to its level, and who give themselves up to it, to that blind devotion which it then manifests and which nothing can afterwards enlighten, nothing tire out. He persuaded it then that he was a marvel and that this marvel stooped to the level of the populace; that he gave himself up entirely, with a devotion unexampled in history, and he gave himself up so far as to make himself like itself, poor, dirty, and miserable. He was its only friend. He had been offered a million merely to keep his mouth shut, but he preferred illness, misery, exile, death itself to a silence that would no longer have permitted him to defend the cause of the poor people.

After winning the heart of the Proletariate, he satisfied their vices by exciting their fury; he authorized them, in the name of his superior wisdom and of his infinite love, to pillage and lay hands on everything.

He legitimized theft as well as murder, greed as well as hatred. His journal contains but two ideas : Satisfy yourself, O People, by admiring Marat and despising the rest of humanity, by loving Marat and exterminating all other respectable citizens.

I should like to be able to pursue all the little tricks of a flirtation between this native of Neuchatel and the Parisian populace. They are delightful. He is even familiar with the speech of Martine to M. Robert : *Je veux être battue*—— In one of many countries into which he tells us he has carried his powerful spirit of observation, he has met with rude peoples where the woman regards a good beating as a proof of love. A wonderful revelation this beating—so he gives it to his idol. From time to time he abuses this populace beside itself with tender devotion, then overwhelms it with tears and protestations of unquenchable love.

I content myself with noting two points which appear to have escaped his biographers. The god of the French Republicans was a determined monarchist who never yields on the principle, returning to it whenever opportunity offers, and this passion for monarchy was one of the chief causes of his influence over the people of Paris.

I do not say he was a Royalist. After the example of Robespierre he long defended Royalty, convinced, like all the great disciples of Rousseau, that the Republic is impossible in a great country like France. But when he found himself known, and on the road to fortune, his vanity, which we have described as boundless, easily persuaded him that he could attain the position to which his peculiar genius summoned him, and to which the passion the people had for him would willingly admit him.

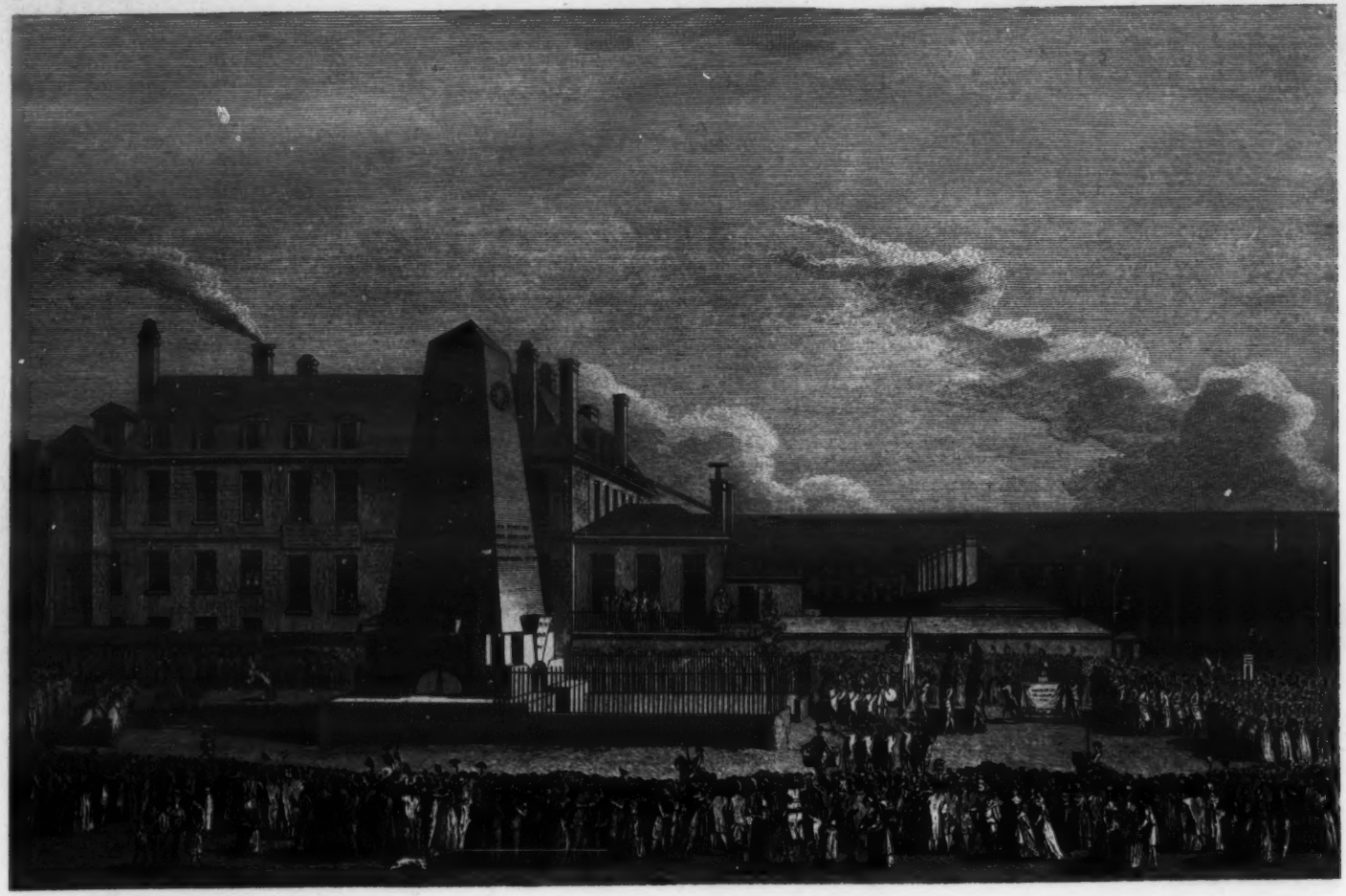
A monarchy, then, was the object of his dream. He dissembled his dream, but, as Amaryllis hid herself, was careful to let a glimpse be seen. He gave the monarch a name which, being taken from the annals of the Roman Republic, might pass without wounding the new Republican prejudices. He called him Dictator or Tribune. But he was careful to add the epithet "military," the more clearly to indicate the all-powerfulness of severity, and to prompt the belief in the brief duration of the function. He even set this Dictator in a grotesque posture, with cannon balls on his feet, so as to quiet the apprehensions of the *bourgeois* and

the liberals. As for the people, he cared not a straw for their suspicion. He saw plainly enough that they had preserved the monarchical instinct of the French race, the need for a guide, for a saviour, and the populace was much enamoured with this prospect of seeing its *friend* become the master and rule the rest of the nation for the benefit of popular appetites.

The *bourgeois* historians of the Revolution have been deceived by the annalists of their own class, as well by the great *bourgeois* as by the middling and the small, as well by Rœderer and Lacretelle as by Roussel d'Épinal and by Prudhomme. They don't do justice to Marat. They sink him in a group of agitators. He was apart from and above these. He was the master of that tribe of *sans-chemises* emerging from behind the *sans-culottes* who were becoming respectable, the chief of that band which fell away at his death, and whose principal members we know, Varlet, Roux, Bernard, Boyer, the captain of the *Spadassinicides;* Gueissier, the chief of that band of workmen who fondly made him daggers in thousands to arm his people with, Vacher, the President of the *Société des Indigents,* and hundreds of others of whom the most energetic let themselves weakly be guillotined after the death of the People's Friend. To command this compact army of fanatics he had foreigners, an active, intelligent band, and so powerful that, among the eleven members composing the Central Revolutionary Committee responsible for the events of the 31st of May, there were nine not French.

One ought, besides the *bourgeois* chroniclers, to refer to the aristocrats and the pure democrats. What do they say? The first, judging without qualification, call him the *Master,* the revolutionary *par excellence.* The others are briefer still. They don't name him at all, they adore him.

His contemporaries were not mistaken. The most thoroughly beaten of them, the Girondins, knew well enough from what quarter came the hardest knocks. Marat is the man they point to. As they are more bruised than intelligent, they even exaggerate this situation; they are not content with believing—wherein they are right—that Marat is the head, they say that he is alone, and that is what earned him Charlotte Corday's stab. For her I have not the grovelling admiration that many worthy people accord to her. While understanding the satisfaction that



may be felt at seeing one of his own two hundred and seventy thousand turned against the sucking Dictator, I am of opinion that the valiant damsel was more resolute than wise. The stab which slew Marat put an end to the Girondins who had incited her. She was in too much of a hurry. Jean Paul was about, if his ulcers permitted him, to become the Dictator of France. But he was not that yet. What disappeared was a candidate for the monarchy. The Republic which, if it had had any sense, would have raised an altar to Charlotte Corday, guillotined her. Meanwhile it found itself so soothed at no longer seeing Marat that it let him be placed where any one liked. His people was anxious to place him in the Heavens, and we shall see how they forced the leaders of the Republic to bow the knee before the new god.

Marat fired the imagination. We must take into account the fever, alternating between delirious sensibility and black despair, that he had kept up for several years in the Parisian populace. We must start with that to explain this extraordinary deification. The general exaltation was to piety as drunkenness is to heroism; but it had the same elemental principle, love ennobled by respect. Contemptible as the idol was, vile as the paramour was, between this grotesque leper and the squalid populace who constituted his political harem, there was a real tenderness which is never found without some accompanying touch of nobility. It is with hesitation that I employ this word, for the attachment of the Parisian populace to this hysterical abortion recalls the devotion shewn by the prostitute to the man who is even more degraded than herself, who beats her, who exploits her, but who is the sole being from whom she may hope for a semblance of love. It will be seen that I am speaking solely of the Parisian populace; with the servility it had long shewn, the rest of the French people followed the lead of the capital.

We must take account, too, of an instinct superior even to love, we must remember faith, which acts here like ivy which has been violently torn from its oak, and which clings to the first trunk it can find, rotten though it may be.

This trunk was rotten beyond everything. But the besotted *bour-*

geois revolutionaries had, with a folly which met its just reward, done their best to conceal the truth from the people. Madame Roland and her troop of finicking phrase-mongers thought that they were doing a wonderful thing in giving Marat a touch of the mythological. They fancied themselves crushingly sarcastic in inventing the joke that Marat did not exist, but was a being of reason, a sort of incarnation of the lower instincts of the crowd. Our artful Swiss did disappear in fact for years, and reappeared more lively than ever, more sympathetic and more formidable than ever, proclaiming that all the writers who had donned his greasy overcoat, while his passion for the people had forced him to hide underground, were sham Marats.

At what moment did the truth get separated from error? Where did the day end and the night begin in this gloaming, what was the human part and what the divine in this avatar? In this way he began to acquire a touch of the ideal.

After the Girondin *bourgeois,* the *bourgeois* of the Mountain fell to work on the clay whence was to issue the statue of the new Jupiter. Hébert thought he had prepared the way for the goddess Aubry, and had played a scurvy trick on the Almighty in sending Him Jean Paul for a colleague. He saw, too late for his own neck, that the god Marat pushed Père Duchesne into the arms of Robespierre's Supreme Being. This Being had, for an attribute, an axe that the man Marat had helped to make, an axe whose blows became legitimate the moment the man became divine. This fateful adjective Camille Desmoulins was the first to pronounce. Disguising his mental giddiness as whim, breaking out into insolence after fits of abjectness, and cleverly hiding his native commonplace under the froth of raillery, he despised and feared Marat; he chaffed him for his infatuation, and toadied him for his popularity. Finding him one day more contemptible and more powerful than was his wont he called him *Divine.*

Did this word open out strange prospects for the superhuman vanity of Jean Paul? It is difficult to say. But Marat became a candidate for a celestial post. He believed himself, as we know, a being of superior essence. While waiting for something better he turned prophet. He

distributed his sibylline leaves in a little pamphlet, recounting three hundred predictions that he had made and that had been realized. All this, no doubt, would have been useless had he died of his sores. He would not have outstripped Lazowski who had reached the Empyrean, but only found a place on the lower level there, because he had succumbed to the malady which it is not easy to name, and which worthy Prudhomme called, without irony, the malady of free men. Marat was more lucky. He had, on his side, the knife, the bath, and the 24 sols.

That the knife should have helped him to soar to the heaven of the Revolution is easily understood; it was as chief of the Revolution that he had been assassinated. But how the bath helped Marat to a place among the "dieux immortels" is a mystery. Certain it is that it holds a great place in popular imagination. It will be carried about, and then exhibited as a sacred relic. One of the gossips who came in crowds to weep along with Barbe Aubin, Marat's portress, well sums up the popular impression: "Isn't it an abominable crime to kill a legislator at the moment he is taking a bath?"

As for the 24 sols, the total sum found on the *Ami du Peuple,* they were irresistible, and excited the admiration and enthusiasm and adoration of the people to the verge of madness. Are we to believe implicitly in this petty cash? Are we, on the other hand, to accept the story of a very free-and-easy friend of the virtuous wife of the virtuous Roland? This friend narrates that at the back of the rooms devoted to the public, which had for sole furniture "the appearance of poverty," there was a sumptuous drawing-room where the festive Marat invited her to be seated on a luxurious sofa. There is no need to recount the rest of the adventure.

Nevertheless, if these twenty-four sols were the only ones displayed to the public, it seems improbable that Marat could keep his household going, pay his servants, the expenses of his journal, and distribute the innumerable benefits to which he so frequently invites our attention, with so poor a treasury. I fancy we may trust Simonne Évrard for that, the housekeeper he had married, as his friend Guirault said, "one fine day at one of his windows." We may trust her not to have begun her divine widowhood with a twenty-four-sols piece.

This epithet "divine" is henceforward obligatory. It is the adjective which will become the peculiar and almost exclusive property of Marat, and of all that emanates from him, all that concerns him. A squib entitled *Comparaison singulière de Marat avec Jésus-Christ* gives us some details about the worship paid to him. Many a print shows us his adorers in the posture of adoration. This worship, to be sure, was not officially decreed, but it actually existed for more than a year. "Marat was proclaimed a god," Louvet tells us, and all who mention him. The Parisian populace forced the Convention to respect this worship, and the Convention meekly obeyed. The rest of France took a more or less enthusiastic part in it. As a matter of fact only one town, Rennes, protested.

Marat was assassinated on the 13th of July. The next day music took the matter up. The songs began, and were not to be silenced for a long time. It was they that inaugurated the new religion. "Il est notre divinité" is the refrain of the first song. Another, following close upon it, cultivates with energy the ellipsis of pathos :

> Pleurons notre seule espérance.
> Des indigents il fut le bienfaiteur,
> Il ne faisait d'autre dépense.

The burial took place on the 16th. It vas one of these gigantic ceremonies to which every Parisian thinks himself personally invited as a particular friend of the illustrious dead, and specimens of which we have seen ourselves. The details of this one are sufficiently familiar. It took place late, from olfactory considerations. The new god was already putrefying, although embalmed. He had been laid on a bier. Only the upper part of the body was visible. The rest was decomposed. The visible part, green and rotting as it was, of this "divine carrion," as the Conventionnel Bassal said, put to flight the most ardent devotees in spite of the flowers, the incense, and the aromatics. All the same they had found a man with no sense of smell, who undertook to personify the indefatigable tenderness of the French people by kissing from time to time the putrefied face.

The ceremony commenced at six o'clock in the evening, not to finish until after midnight. The goal of the procession was the garden of the



Cordeliers, where the relics of the new god were to be laid upon—the word is Prudhomme's—a *reposoir*. Prudhomme concludes: "The obsequies of the 'Ami du Peuple' were in keeping with that fine title. A great concourse of people, especially of citizenesses, was present. The lugubrious ceremony was prolonged far into the night. The Convention came to the church of the Cordeliers to throw a few flowers upon the Martyr of Liberty on his deathbed. Two things made a deep impression, his shirt all red with blood, and the bath wherein he perished so miserably." These were the relics, with some more trifling objects we shall encounter in another chapel of the new cult.

The muses and the arts could not be absent from the feast. They all came, Eloquence and Song did not wait to be pressed. Audouin and Bonvalet unchain lyric poesy and sculpture, which become the rage. On the 21st of July the first offers to the Convention, of which he is a member, some stanzas on Marat. On the 27th the second dedicates to it a bust of the martyr. It decrees that this shall henceforth decorate the place of its sittings in company with Le Peletier, Brutus, and Dampierre.

The club of the Cordeliers, formerly so powerful, was in the way of becoming a mere local club, when that of the Jacobins became the Mother Society, the club of all Paris and of all France. But Marat had been so thorough-going a Cordelier that the latter found their power revived in his divinity. So they did their best to back him up. All the same it was not without a struggle that the Jacobins let go their idol. Marat was a Jacobin also. He had been President of the society under solemn circumstances. Thus there was a quarrel over the divine heart. The Cordeliers carried the day. They observed no bounds in their triumph, and made of the 28th of July a holiday which, with the initial ceremony of the feast of Reason, is the most characteristic holiday of the Revolution. Each was consistent with the other. After trying to dishonour Christ, they tried to dishonour God. The Convention applauded in both cases. It applauded Brochet as it would by and by applaud Chaumette. The Cordeliers came, in fact, to announce officially that they were "about to raise an altar to the heart of Marat," while waiting for his heart to be borne to the Pantheon so as to "sanctify the place." The Convention

applauded, and appointed a commission of twenty-four members to represent it, following piously in the procession.

This date of the 28th of July, 1793, which definitively inaugurated the new worship, must be borne in mind. It was at the foot of one of the *reposoirs* set up in the garden of the Luxembourg that was pronounced the famous speech whose text was : "Cœur Sacré de Jésus, cœur sacré de Marat, vous avez les mêmes droits à nos hommages," and which, after comparing Simonne Évrard to the Virgin Mary, ended with : "Jesus Christ is a prophet, Marat is a god." The anonymous orator was thought a poor-witted fellow by the real Republicans. It was Brochet who uttered the final dictum : "All that sort of thing is foolishness. We mustn't talk of Jesus. Marat wasn't meant to be compared with Him; the one defended kings, the other had the courage to crush them."

In this way was inaugurated the Maratine idolatry. It would be a long story to relate all its features. While the people elevated its friend into the Empyrean, the public authorities looked after his mortal glory. The Council General of the Commune of Paris decided that the Rue des Cordeliers should be called Rue Marat, the Place de l'Observatoire, Place de l'Ami du Peuple. On the 13th its registrar, that ignoble outcast from the aristocracy, Dorat-Cubières, delivers in praise of the dead a poem which it is decreed shall be sent to all the popular societies.

A few days earlier Simonne Évrard came before the Convention to play the "Widow Rousseau," a profitable part. It had brought Thérèse Levasseur a pension which had enabled her to find another husband. Simonne played the part with more fury than profit. She accuses everybody, she has caught Marat's malady. She asks for vengeance against Carra, against Ducos, and against Dulaure, then against Roux, all of them monsters.

After the example of the "divine Simonne," as Albertine Marat styles her, the Maratists become exacting. On the 11th of September Brochet joins the Jacobins in demanding the expulsion of the Conventionnel Bourdon de l'Oise. What is his crime? He was once wanting in respect to Marat. Brochet is only one of Robespierre's marionettes who wants to make his enemy, Bourdon, bite the dust.

The glory of the new god mounts higher and higher. The Convention

decides on the 18th of Brumaire and the 25th of Frimaire, Year II—18th of October, 5th of November '93—that he shall supersede Rousseau on the clocks, and Mirabeau at the Pantheon. Moline, registrar of the Convention, presents it on the 26th of Pluviôse with the epitaph to be placed on his tomb. This glory becomes so dazzling that it excites the jealousy of Hébert. In one of those cloudy articles in which Maximilien excels, and which are not disdained by Père Duchesne when he is tired of swearing, he complains of the intriguers who affect to worship Marat, though they detested him in his life-time. He begins to see that this divinity has turned out the opposite of what he supposed, and far from leading to Atheism, keeps alive in the popular mind ideas of gross but sincere supernaturalism.

Robespierre, who was impatient of every sound that did not echo his name, had secretly prompted some of his friends to attack a renown too imposing for his taste. The thing took place at the Jacobins the previous month—8th of Nivôse—it is a curious scene. Levasseur de la Sarthe, anxious that no glory should be lacking to the Ami du Peuple, had had the delightful idea of making a great general of him. It was he who had taken Toulon. How? By the intermediary of Dugommier whom he had appointed general. Thereupon Leclercq mounts the tribune, and affirms, in opposition, that it was Robespierre who took the town in question, seeing that he defended Barras and Fréron, the "Saviours of the South."

But the great popular current carries opposition away. During this month of Nivôse we have the portrait of Marat by Fabre d'Églantine. The Convention gives his name to the island of Boin. The Cordeliers declare the time has come to publish all the works of the immortal man. On reflection they discover that this would be a bad business speculation, and that what should be done is to have them printed at the public expense. They address themselves to the Convention which dares not refuse. Everywhere you meet with nothing but people who have rendered services to Marat, who have helped him at all times, and have been his favourites; and I should astonish not a few worthy people nowadays, if I were to tell them of the lively tenderness their grandfathers had for him. But I content myself with a few echoes from the Jacobin tribune.

The Conventionnel Maure declares that Marat named him his son. Legendre gave the god a hiding-place for two years, Boucher St. Sauveur was his quartermaster, Bassal, curé of St. Louis at Versailles, also sheltered him. The citizeness Fleury, of the Comédie-Française, snatched him from the daggers of the aristocracy. Dumas, having no pathetic anecdote handy, throws himself upon his adored bust. A certain Debienne, although quite unknown, is received into the society because he once defended Jean Paul's good fame. On the 8th of Messidor citizeness Borny's picture, representing the apotheosis of Marat, is greeted with acclamation. The Convention sets the example. On the 22nd of Floréal—11th of May—it decrees on the motion of Thibaudeau that the picture of the death of Marat shall be reproduced at the Gobelins.

It was not pathos only that the god demanded. Voulland severely reminds a deputation from the popular society of Caen that their old town might well share the fate of Lyons; was it not the lair of the monster who cut short his precious life? Vadier demands that, pending the destruction of Caen, the deputies be arrested, their demeanour in presence of the god not looking well for their patriotism. The Council General of the Commune, on the 30th of June, '94, gives forth a comic note : "Is it not a crime to see lock-ups named after Marat who would never so much as have killed a fly? Besides, the Republic is held to have no lock-ups!!!" This is the most ingenious of all the parliamentary fictions recorded in history.

Encouraged by official demonstrations the worship had spread. Prints shew us the two principal chapels consecrated to him, one in the garden of the Cordeliers, the other under a wooden obelisque erected in the Place du Carrousel, the chapel of La Réunion or of La Fraternité. This last chapel contained the relics, the inkstand, the lamp, and the bath. The same prints give us an idea of the worship. Groups of devotees advance in procession. Lovers come and embrace before the inkstand, young girls kneel before the bath, and a woman, prostrating herself in front of the lamp, offers to it the homage of a basket of flowers.

The society of Revolutionary Women, whose virtue one can appreciate from the name of its President, Rose Lacombe, forms a sort of *Order of*

the Daughters of Marat. Their zeal for the worship of the god is kept vigorous by a few personages who pose as high priests, Guirault, Vatar, Brochet, and a gunner who is unwilling to leave his name to the mercy of posterity.

France had no thought of protesting; streets, villages, market towns, sections, clubs, volunteer companies take his name, the new-born are honoured by it. The number of his tombs is counted by thousands. He has become the domestic god, the protector of the Republican alcove and of the civic cradle. His bust acts as a conductor to the Revolutionary lightning. It is everywhere.

After the Gobelins, the Sèvres manufactory was entrusted with the task of producing his likeness. He is the Apollo of modern times, his effigy is thrust under every nose. Terra cotta, plaster, marble, gold, silver, ivory, all nature offers him its tribute. The snuff-boxes are proud of his effigy, the sweetmeat boxes do not escape it. It was destined to decorate public trophies, to carpet drawing-rooms, cottages, and shops, to ornament chimney-pieces, to appear on book plates, to gleam in jewelson fair necks, the insignia of civic life, a protecting image, an amulet of devotion for the Republic.

The fury of the muses is redoubled in his honour, the songs can no longer contain themselves. "They adore his ashes." Music had not always an easy task, and that which accompanied the entry of Marat's portraits into the temple "had to depict immortality." Melpomene and Thalia took their share in the business, and ten or more plays are reckoned to have been inspired by his virtues.

We possess a few fragments of his litanies and creed. Children made the sign of the cross in his name : "In the name of Marat and Lazowski." Grégoire, who gives us this information, does not tell us who was the German that the Republic invoked alongside of this Swiss and this Pole.

After the 9th of Thermidor this god lost credit. The lightning was not so menacing. There was less necessity for a screen. All the same this phantom remained with the Jacobins. Until the time when the Girondins recovered a certain amount of influence, people continued to bend the knee to this fetid Jupiter. He is even accorded that place in the Pantheon which had been so long promised him. It was the last of his days of glory.

Facilis descensus Averni. His descent was as rapid as the ascent had been stupifying. I have no idea of detailing the episodes here. Five months after his entry into the Pantheon the youth of Paris found another one for him. In January, '95, a crowd of citizens and workmen bore through Paris not, as people have said, his corpse, but an effigy of him. The effigy was burnt and its ashes thrown into the big sewer in the Rue Montmartre. This sewer was filled with statues that had been carried off from all sides, and over it was written : "Panthéon des Jacobins."

The new religion ended in characteristic fashion. On the 8th of February, '95, some revelling workmen, who had broken a bust of Marat in the shop of the last but one of his devotees, were condemned to replace it. After having searched Paris through they were obliged to go and fish one up out of the sewer in the Rue Montmartre. Those were the only ones left. Two months before there had been hundreds of thousands of them. The Deus Maximus of the Terror had departed as he had lived. If ever people want to resuscitate him, they will know where to find him.

CH. D'HÉRICAULT.





THE SCULPTOR RODIN

Auguste Rodin's fame can hardly even now be said to have reached its zenith. Marking his upward flight, it is curious to glance back upon his early struggle. For the somewhat noisy homage of to-day was not always his portion. At the outset, his earnings were hardly more than a labourer's wage, certainly less than the salary of a clerk. His young promise was shackled not only by the necessity of much uncongenial toil, but by the extraordinary hostility that greeted his first efforts. Some among us will remember the storm that was raised by Rodin's maiden contribution to the Salon. Fantastic as the charge will read in some future history of art, he was roundly accused of having built his work upon a cast from the living model. But it will be time enough to discuss this characteristic incident some few pages further on, in the rapid sketch we propose to make of Rodin and his career. The probationer is now hailed a master, and breathes the bracing air of independence. Feasts have been given, speeches made, and toasts drunk in his honour. The red ribbon peeps from his button-hole. And the

uninitiated, puzzled by the shifting hubbub of blame and adulation, ask, with a not unnatural impatience, what manner of man this really is, what the meaning and the value of his work.

Let us satisfy this legitimate curiosity as far as we are able.

* * *

We shall have to thread our way along the Rue de l'Université, through the long boulevards and wide avenues that intersect and run parallel round about the Invalides. Passing the stately old houses, the venerable trees, the quiet little English-looking dwellings with neat gardens, so familiar to every Parisian who has learnt his Paris, we come to a point not far from the Champ de Mars, and close upon the Eiffel Tower, where the physiognomy of the neighbourhood suddenly changes.

We are at No. 182. A great *porte-cochère,* like the wide cartway into a farm-yard, leads us into an immense court, paved with moss-grown flagstones, the corners green with grass. A flock of children are playing some boisterous game, but their shouts are scarcely heard in the vast space, and only emphasize the silence. Tall branches that have scaled the wall stretch over the peaceful spot, and throw cool shadows as in a park. On every side lie massive blocks of marble of every conceivable shape, recalling, in full daylight, a stone-mason's shed, and in the pink and purple glow of sunset, or under dim twilight shadows, some rock-strewn moorland. This is the master's store-house. These cold white stones, with their jagged sides and delicate blue veins, are the raw material of his merchandise. In these unmeaning blocks slumber captive statues, that to-morrow's chisel shall set free, unbinding the fettered limbs, loosing the cramped torso, shaking out the close-laid hair, parting the sealed lips, raising drooping lids over eyes in which immortality indeed succeeds to death.

On the opposite side of this field of stones, the doors of many studios open on to the *al fresco* warehouse, or, to be quite accurate, shut on to it. For the denizens of these ground-floor rooms with their lofty ceilings and wide bays of glass are grudging of their time, and surly to a certain class of visitors. The unwelcome guest will have to

take himself off at last, with no response but the stolid wooden stare of the inhospitable barrier. Letter J. This is our goal. The key grinds in the lock, and the door swings back. A glance round shows us that we have disturbed no favourite model, straining every nerve in the effort to pose motionless as a mass of petrified humanity. Rodin is alone. Look well at him. It will help you in the comprehension of his work.

The man who stands before you, his hands covered with wet clay, his clothes splashed with plaster, is short and sturdy as to figure, peculiarly tranquil as to manner. He has no specially salient features, yet his physiognomy as a whole is full of character. Framed by the close-cut hair and the long fair beard that floats upon his breast, we see a mobile face, that in a few minutes passes from absorption to anxiety, from anxiety to smiling calm. The mists of preoccupation roll away, and a cheerful kindliness beams out upon us. The brow, of a somewhat mystic cast, and sharply arched, but wide and well developed, is that of a thinker. The gently aquiline nose completes a profile that recalls the profiles of sculptured monks in cathedral porches. But this is a monk full of human sympathies and subtleties, armed with critical faculty and force of will, and haunted, in his artist cell, by modern questionings, and also by modern solutions. There is a curious harmony between look and voice, the former keen and brilliant, and seeming to draw light and even colour from the eye; the latter, soft, vibrating, and tender, with a genial ring that loses nothing from a certain note of caustic humour specially manifest in its laughter.

* * *

In this brief sketch of an artist's career it will be needless to dwell with a novelist's minuteness upon purely personal details. It is of course of supreme interest to learn how the great minds of the earth have lived and loved, hated and suffered, like other men. Yet how hard it is to read the riddle of such hearts and brains, except in so far as they unfold themselves in the familiar gossip of confidential letters, self-revelations which echo like voices from the tomb. We shall therefore set down nothing here but the bare facts of the artist's life, as they have

been manifested in his creations. Names and dates, design, modelling, and plastic conceptions, must stand for passions, joys, grief, and moral crises.

Rodin was born in Paris in 1840. So much for his age and ethnography. As to his artistic genesis, is it not written in the official catalogues of the Salon : "Pupil of Barye and of Carrier-Belleuse." It is one of those curious cases of contradiction between a man's origin and his development, of which one might multiply instances *ad infinitum*. Of course, catalogues must say *something;* but as a fact Rodin was to a very slight extent only a pupil of Barye, in the strict sense of the term, and of Carrier-Belleuse he cannot really be called a pupil at all.

He passed indeed into the studio in the Museum in which Barye carried on his silent teaching. There, with a number of other young fellows, he enjoyed the mute instructions of the sculptures and anatomical models that stood about, stimulated now and then by a theoretical dictum or practical direction from the *patron*. On certain days, the studio of the great *animalier* was open to visitors. These visitors, alas! came knowing nothing of what they were to see, and were deaf to the music of the sublime menagerie created by the master. The plaintive belling of the stags, the neighing of the heavy destriers, did not reach their ears. They had no eyes for the spring and crouch of the great cats, for the muscular involutions of the boa, for the delicate mobility of the gazelles, nor for the heavy roll of the iron-clad pachyderms. Most of Rodin's co-disciples are still insensible to all this. But he himself, in these latter days, both sees and hears, and if he was never a pupil of Barye before, he has become one now.

With Carrier-Belleuse, his relations were much more definite. Here it was not a case of master and pupil, but of employer and employed. For six years, Rodin worked in that studio whence have issued so many creations of facile grace, from figures to decorative arabesques. His share in their development was, no doubt, considerable, but he is not likely to claim his tithe in their author's fame, and we need not therefore attempt any such division of property on his behalf. But if Rodin brought away from Carrier's studio some of the master's prodigious manipulative



skill, he paid for it in kind. He was a journeyman waiting resignedly for the day when he too should take rank as a creator. And Carrier has just cause for pride in his apprentice.

This page in Rodin's story is dated 1864-1870. From 1871 to 1877, he worked in active partnership with the Belgian artist Van Rasbourg, and the curious in such matters who pass through Brussels may pay a visit to the Bourse, and pick out traces of Rodin's chisel among the colossal sculptures of the façade, and the caryatides of the interior. His own most vivid memories of these days of mechanical completion are of the happy hours of solitude he was free to revel in after his day's work was done. His mind had not yet begun to formulate a personal conception of his art, and was keenly alive to impressions from without. He recalls with delight those first tastes of liberty, his long rambles among shifting lights and ever-changing vegetations, through the drift of fine rain that, in those northern, canal-cut provinces by the sea, seems, even when the sky is brightest, to be lurking in the atmosphere. It was in these days of mingled concentration and reverie that both the man and the artist were being formed. Alike in his silent hours of work between the studio walls, and in his communing with nature, he was perfecting his capacity for noble and independent work.

And then at last began the period of tentative essays, by a hand not yet altogether sure of itself. The touch is now feeble and hesitating, now almost brutal in its vigour. As early as 1864, attention had been directed to a new and powerful individuality by his exhibition of the bizarre but vigorous study, "The man with the broken nose." The inspiration came from a chance face that had stirred the artist's fancy. At last, in 1877, "The Age of Bronze" was sent to the Salon.

The accusation that at once followed its reception was one that had never been brought in numerous cases where it might notoriously have rested on more solid grounds. The justly indignant artist was charged by certain members of the Jury with having submitted to them what was no more than a cast from a living model. The reason given for the belief was the extraordinary precision in the modelling of certain parts of the body. An official commission, appointed to examine into the matter,

came to the conclusion that there had been at any rate a partial use of some such method. The charge soon gained ground, and it needed all the weight of reiterated testimony from an expert like M. Paul Dubois, and from other sculptors, after examination of Rodin's first sketches, to establish his honesty with the authorities of the *Beaux-Arts*. By way of compensation, a medal of the third class was adjudged the "Age of Bronze" when it returned to the Salon in 1880, in its final material. It was bought by the State, and placed in the gardens of the Luxembourg, near the Orangery, in a position that shows the nervous modelling of the figure with fine effect.

It seems, therefore, that the official inspectors had not looked with discriminating eyes either at this "Age of Bronze" or at another figure in the *atelier* of the Rue des Fourneaux, a "St. John Preaching," which was exhibited later on. The anchorite, spare and lean, but with iron muscles, stands with upturned face, his gesture that of the preacher burning to convince, his expression full of the rapt illumination of the visionary. The knotted, sinewy torso, the horny wayworn feet, are perfect in their vitality. Could such effects as these have been won by the mechanical proceeding with which the sculptor had been charged? Compare the bluntness of feature, the nerveless inertness of limb in any actual case of casting from life, and there can be but one verdict. What is there in common between this vigorous, breathing realism on the one hand, and that transcript of temporary death on the other? The bronze "St. John" was exhibited at the Salon of 1881, together with another fine figure, "The Creation of Man," and in the years following, down to 1885, Rodin was represented in the nave of the Palais de l'Industrie, by busts of Jean-Paul Laurens, Carrier-Belleuse, Victor Hugo, Dalou, and Antonin Proust.

* * *

We have anticipated somewhat, and so to keep up a semblance of chronological order, we must linger here for a few moments over an event that has largely influenced Rodin's artistic career. This was the conception and execution of the Gate for the Museum of Decorative Art.

The unjust odium cast upon the master in the "Age of Bronze" incident had had the effect of raising him up many partisans. The originality of his dawning genius was pointed out and insisted upon by several writers. Others followed. We have already spoken of M. Paul Dubois' generous championship. Finally, to his honour be it written, M. Turquet gave him the commission for the Gate.

We shall find it standing in the *atelier* of the Rue de l'Université, where we have received Rodin's pleasant greeting, and watched him at his work. The Gate, indeed, pervades the whole studio. The statues on the top, certain groups on the panels, the side posts, and some of the lower bas-reliefs are in their places. But throughout the vast room are scattered pell-mell statuettes of every dimension, upturned faces, twisted arms, contorted legs. Behind the Gate, which is about twenty feet high, stretches a vista as of some phantasmagoric cemetery, peopled by a mute yet eloquent crowd, each unit of which we feel impelled to examine, as in the conning of a book that has to be deciphered page by page, paragraph by paragraph, sentence by sentence, word by word.

And indeed the work has its counterpart in a profoundly suggestive book. In these studies we find prodigious observation and lofty metaphysic, every shade of human passion, evoked by means of a gesture, attitude, expression of feature, turn of head. The subject which will give a name to the Gate is one that had taken captive the imagination of the dreamer, before it suggested itself to the sculptor. It is Dante's *Inferno*. Sublime as is the theme in itself, the artist made choice of it merely as the necessary framework in which to set forth a complex tragedy of human life and feeling. On this "Gate of Hell" he has brought together, in tumultuous action, a whole cycle of passions, a manifestation of all the instincts, fatalities, desires, despairs, that groan and travail in man. In Rodin's hands the great Ghibelline's poem has lost its Florentine element to take on a wider significance. Local colour has been fused into vast synthetic outlook, and we stand face to face with the changeless humanity of all countries and of all time.

To give a coherent description of the Gate in its present state is of course impossible. The sculptor has yet to finish the arrangement of

parts, and an orderly presentment of episodes is interrupted by perpetual solutions of continuity in the most imposing features. Only the frame of the sculptured poem is as yet complete. But we may trace some general idea of the principal divisions. Two low reliefs are let into the base above which rises the principal composition. In their centres are carved faces mirroring every phase of suffering, brows furrowed by long cares, features contracted with pain, and tremulous with unshed tears. These heads are bordered by a band of women, satyrs, and centaurs, in which a fine contrast has been got by the blending of supple grace with lusty vigour.

The narrow spaces of the uprights on either side imprison a long ascending line of delicate flowing figures, modelled with a combination of high and low reliefs. These represent the gentle sinners, the happy criminals doomed for snatching at unlawful joys, lovers whose pangs are sweetened by unity and suffering. Here too are wrinkled women, in whom life has burnt down to a last dying flicker, and new-born infants, as yet scarcely conscious of being, though already marked by its miseries.

Crowning the structure are three male figures over the pediment. They lean against each other for support in attitudes of supreme desolation; their extended arms and warning fingers all point to one spot, with a gesture of despairing certainty. They seem an embodiment of the Dantesque inscription : *Lasciate ogni speranza.* Below them, apart from the crowd that throngs the first circle of hell, Dante, or rather the Poet, stands meditative, but with the air of a man of action in repose. It is a nude figure, bearing no sign of nationality or of epoch. The muscular limbs are formed for strife and movement, the vigorous face, ravaged by the fierce emotion of an absorbing idea, speaks of pity, indignation, all the tumultuous depths of feeling that rouse the dreamer to enthusiasm, or move him to passionate tears.

The musings of the seer may well be vast and mournful, for here, at his feet, beneath his gaze, lies the whole wild vortex of humanity. Poor humanity, hurled through space, grovelling in the dust, maimed of limb, and sad of soul, yet clinging obstinately to life and suffering; crying aloud in its agony, yet smiling through its tears, and weaving into song



its feverish anxieties, its shadowy joys, its frenzied woes. In these tremendous panels the master has sought to trace a panorama of carnal suffering, and with it the more silent torments of the martyrs to love, ambition, unattainable ideals. He has placed side by side the cruel symbols of physiological fatalities, and of futile intellectual struggles.

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Such is the rapid summing up of a keenly observant mind deeply tinged with a poetic pessimism. We come away from the contemplation of such a work deeply impressed by its author's profoundly mournful judgment of man's activities, by his passionate worship for grace and power in the human body, by his perfect sympathy with expression.

We must not forget—indeed it is impossible to forget—that the dreamer is a sculptor, a being in whose mind form springs up simultaneously with idea, if indeed it does not precede idea. The great draughtsman and transcriber of character and passion, Gavarni, used frequently to let the real types he had produced tell their own tale, and furnish him with an argument for his drawing. In like manner, a face that has grown under Rodin's hand speaks to him with gentle insistance, like nature herself, tells him what feeling moves it, what bodily bliss or mental anguish has left a hall-mark on it, whispers him by what name he must give it to the world. Thus the embodiment of the artist's thought is primarily a work of art. Truth has not been subordinate to rhetorical effect; no vague literary significance, or unsubstantial essay in illustration has crushed all vital animation. All is full of balance and precision. The symbolism is natural and unrestrained, the living idea in the work breathes and moves, the patience and ingenuity of the sculptor betray themselves in that highest triumph of modern thought and skill, a pose that is new.

Looking at his works from the purely technical point of view, it is in this matter of novel attitude that Rodin's bold originality is chiefly manifest. In these latter days sculpture, as any frequenter of our annual exhibitions must have noticed, is content to repeat *ad nauseam* half-a-dozen well-worn poses. The causes of this monotony are no doubt partly the tradition of the schools, and the uniformity of commissions, partly the fatal

habit of resting content with a received idea. Every one will hail the following as old acquaintances : body erect, one knee bent, one arm upraised;—recumbent figure, raised on elbow;—figure with hands clasped behind the head to throw the bust into relief;—head resting on one hand, the other hand clasping the elbow.

But Rodin, comparing together the forms of nature and of art, was astounded at the countless possibilities of pose. He contends that their variety is infinite and boundless, that every movement of the body, every turn of a limb is endlessly suggestive. His difficulty lies, not at all in the perception of novel attitude; rather is he depressed by the impossibility in one brief life, of seizing and fixing in marble or bronze the countless combinations of line and shade of expression that strike the seeing eye. Rushing into vivid and unhackneyed metaphor, we might say that, for him, the variations of the human body are as the waves of the sea, as the sand of the shore, as the stars of the heavens for multitude! Life passes in array before the observer, and the tumults thrill his soul. Some one most subtle of its vibrations becomes incarnate, takes visible form in a statue, just as a sudden deep-felt thought, written in an immortal page, has borne strange fruit, making an epoch in the story of mankind.

* * *

In the sketches, studies, and finished works piled up in the sculptor's studio, we can follow the continuous effort of his brain. The creations of every moment lie there, visible to the eye in the natural order of their development.

This seated woman, with a mass of stone on her shoulder, proclaims her despair by the droop of her head, by her closed eyes, by her look of final resignation, by the collapse of her dorsal muscles, by the general langour of her pose. Another, crouching, her limbs gathered under her and her chin resting on her knees, retains her passive, mysterious look as she is lifted in the strong arms of a man whose face comes close to hers. Here, frantic couples enlace one another, there, with light caress, they pass nervous hands across one another's cheeks. The group called "Paolo and Francesca" is the apotheosis of love's preliminaries, of the con-



fidences, hesitations, and modest shrinkings which precede surrender! How tenderly the man's hand, a hand made to strike or grasp, how tenderly it lies upon his mistress! The woman too, settles on him like a bird, clings to him like a tender spray of ivy, gives herself up to her love with a last flutter. Here again, in the arms of a satyr, we find a woman plunged in the deep slumber which follows satisfied desire. A woman with a wild mass of tangled hair, drags herself along on hands and knees, screaming like a cat, and lifting a nightmare face to Heaven. A woman lies stretched on the ground, her face all swollen with tears, deaf to the call of a companion, with arms tossed wildly over her head, her mouth parted in a bitter cry. A woman defends herself against a satyr, her limbs stiff and tense with the struggle, her face convulsed with shame and horror at contact with the hairy, thick-lipped monster; the same woman has yielded, and heedless of her possessor who watches her uneasily, she stands aside erect and self-absorbed, twisting her hair with tranquil coquetry. A female figure with proud head, lofty carriage, and fixed eyes, rushes by, carrying on her back a slender stripling, fainting from the wild course through the air. She clasps him with arms straining behind her back, and he lies inert as a corpse along the supple loins of his ravisher. Three sirens, of different height and posture, sing, with arms entwined, forming an irregular sloping group like the reeds in a Pan pipe.—A danaïd falls and lies prostrate on the earth. The dead awake on the day of judgment, with all the passions and desires of their past lives. The miser clutches his gold pieces. The pleasure-loving woman, still half-asleep, her lips swollen with her long torpor, extends her arms. An Eve, vigorous and muscular, a creature formed for love and maternity, of massive contours with delicate attachments, shadows her face with her crossed uplifted arms. A kneeling fauness rocks her spare and supple body like a flower-stalk, with a feverish gesture full of seductive raillery, and laughs all over her gruesome deathly face, half-woman, half-animal.

And we pass on to others, and others again. We might fill a whole book with enumeration and description. But incredible as it seems, we shall find that throughout the long procession, we never come upon two creations that are alike. The bodies that bend, straighten, or entwine,

are each distinguished from the other by some sudden, natural, and yet amazing flexion of the torso. Arms and legs are drawn up, extended, or entwined, sometimes with a naïve ungainliness that has its own charm. Faces are upturned or hidden, clear-cut or indistinct in proportion as they submit to the law that governs the creation as a whole, the dominant expression that asserts itself from crown of head to sole of foot. And all this mass of animated matter seems to challenge comparison with nature by its multiplicity of forms, its divergence of types, its startling mobility of gesture.

* * *

Love, though not sole sponsor of the forms and postures adopted by the artist, has been one of his chief inspirers. The passionate expression of desire, the ecstasy of possession, have found in Rodin a poet at once comprehensive and sternly true. But it would be a mistake to fancy that even in the most realistic of these frenzied groups, the artist has pandered to base instincts, or joined hands with obscenity. The sentiments expressed throughout this saturnalian dance of furious lust is profoundly mournful. Rage, melancholy, physical langour, all tell the same tale of joys that fail to satisfy, of transports that leave the soul still athirst. As Daudet has said, the same key-note of suffering in its sexual manifestation, is struck throughout. The master shows us in varied guises the first man of the Hebrew mythology, and the woman fashioned from him. One in their essence, indivisible though divided, and yearning, endlessly and impossibly, to cast aside their duality, and melt into union once more.

The sculptor's intention, moreover, is visible in every creation of his hand. The mingled pain and passion that informs his modelling, the caressing tenderness that tempers his virile strength, speak eloquently of an overflowing pity for humanity, of a loving solicitude for every form of beauty. Dreamy, tearful, submissive, or frenzied and rebellious, the woman of his creation is still a proud captive, restless and ill at ease in her abasement. Whether warring against the suggestions of her senses, or sinking, with mirthless laughter, to the very depths of carnal pollu-

tion, true grace and imperious beauty are still alive in her. In the rich development of his Eve, as in the long legs, the thin arms, the heavy hips and bust of his fauness, we trace the same wrestling with nature for her secrets, the realization of that charm of untamed grace, vigorous yet delicate, that haunts the sculptor like a spell.

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Other methods and other aims have been called into play by Rodin's treatment of contemporary portraiture, and his busts have been strikingly successful both in likeness and expression of personality. The same keen powers of observation came to his aid here as in the symbolization of passion, but it was further necessary to strike a decisively individual note, and not merely to reproduce a man's feature, but also to give a reflex of his mind.

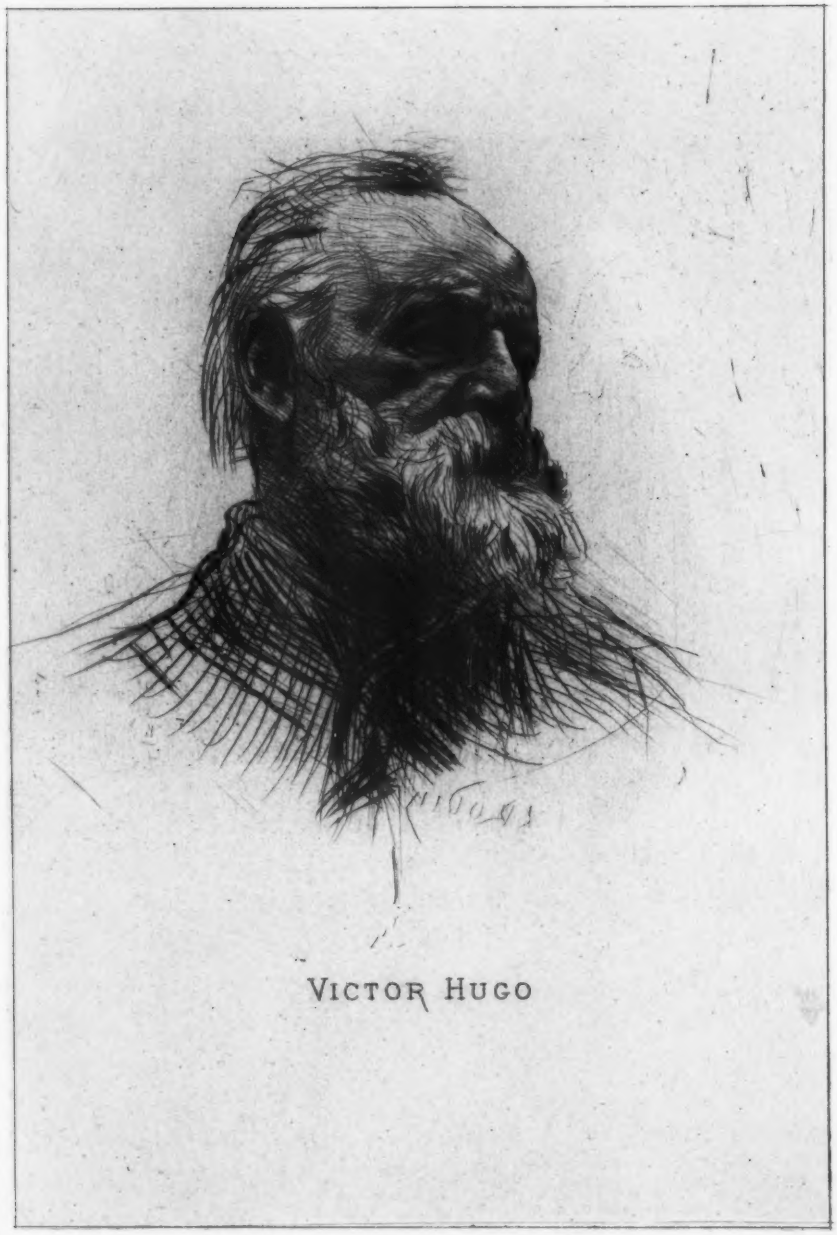
And here again the artist can point to triumphant achievement, so great is the force of a perfect harmony between hand and brain, so absolute the certainty of result obtained by a habit of resolute and unflinching toil. Is not the sobered age of Hugo's fiery genius plainly stamped upon this weary yet serene face? Can we not read Dalou's tenacity and clearness of intellect in the nervous modelling of the head and the sharp outline of the profile; Rochefort's defiant scorn of destiny, and ironic vigour in these arched brows, these candid, preoccupied eyes, this mouth that we see can both bite and smile; the voluptuous exotic beauty of a tropical flower in this bust of Madame——, a fair Peruvian who was wise enough to credit this sculptor *par excellence* of violent emotions with artistic delicacy and a feeling for feminine grace?

Rodin's gifts as historian and painter of character, so striking in his imperishable portraits, are not less apparent in his marvellous dry-points. His plates of Victor Hugo and Henry Becque were received with acclamation by all engravers who were not blinded by professional jealousy.

We might linger long over these engraved portraits, and over the marvellous rendering of anatomical and osteological phenomena in countless drawings, but it is time to pass over on to another of the master's great works. In his colossal group of "The Six Burghers of Calais" we see

Rodin in two fresh aspects, as chronicler and as the sculptor of public monuments. The essential qualities of such work—originality, decorative effect, and an intellectual grasp of history—are all conspicuous. To study these six Burghers (of whom only three were exhibited in 1886), we must leave the Rue de l'Université for the Boulevard de Vaugirard, No. 117, a second studio, which the master's rapid rate of production necessitated. It is a large room lying between the Boulevard and one of the little gardens one finds in the less aristocratic quarters of Paris. The light that falls mournfully on a confusion of scattered objects, cartoons, clay models in miniature, is cold and grey as in a chapel. The central figure in the room is a "Vanquished Fatherland" with broken wing drooping tragically, and from out the chaos around rise, larger than life, the figures of the six Calaisiens, destined some day to take up their station in the old town by the sea, and look down on the angry swell of waters imprisoned in the strait.

By the force of an intense sympathy with his subject, and keen perception of the historic narrative, the artist has been enabled to build up the whole drama, and set before us time, place, attitude, and above all, the chords of human feeling vibrating in the scene. With the eyes of his mind he saw those six men marching along a road of briars and flints. His inspiration rebelled at the idea of the conventional treatment of such a theme, the heroes of the story grouped in a pyramid, the supernumeraries silhouetted against the pedestal. He insisted strongly upon the slow procession, grouping his figures at certain distances from each other, so as to preserve the character of a death march of men desperate or resigned, accentuating the slow weary gait of the old, the feverish haste of the young. The victims must pass to the gallows as they had passed in his dreams, in straggling file, their eyes fixed on the goal. Eustache de Saint-Pierre, Jean d'Aire, Jacques and Pierre de Wissant, and the two anonymous heroes whose hard fate it has been to share the danger without the immortality, all confront us in this *cortège* of civic Christs, marching to death for the common weal, humiliated to outward seeming, yet burning with the proud consciousness of their sacrifice. They pass along, the old man with shaking head, stiff limbs, lean



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wrinkled hands, knotted muscles, and swollen veins; the quadragenarian, robust and sturdy, who might be marching musket on shoulder; the young man with drooping head and hand outstretched in the gesture of a last farewell, and this other, last in the procession, with the rugged head, the close-cropped hair and iron mouth, grasping in his hand the key of the city, and attesting his stern willingness to die and his indignant sense of outrage in every limb and in every wrathful feature. Through each of the six contrasting types runs the same synthetic expression of human feeling at white heat; renunciation, pride, disdain, and anguish culminating in a mute paroxysm of emotion, in which speech itself is less eloquent than the wandering gesture of the hand, the rapt exaltation of the face.

* * *

We have now glanced at Rodin's *œuvre* both as a whole and in some of its most prominent details. To see something of the inner workings of his mind, looking into that spiritual laboratory where he moulds the first impalpable forms of his creations, we should have to weigh opinions, transcribe conversations, and analyse the liberal education Rodin has given himself by books and by travels.

Such a process lies outside our present province. It will be enough to point out that his wide range of reading, even his enthusiasm for his favourite authors, Dante, Baudelaire, and Flaubert, and for two or three contemporaries, has been without prejudice to his originality as a sculptor. He has never degenerated into an illustrator. Nor have his travels among ancient monuments effaced his individuality or caused him to bow down in slavish worship of the antique. What Rodin has best assimilated in the great masters of past ages is their authoritative assertion of independence, and in literature his favourite studies have been those profound analyses of life and character that correspond with the symbolism of forms. Laying aside the axioms of professors, he has caught the reality of Greek art in defiance of rules and canons. He proclaims himself the admiring brother of the great architects of the Middle Ages, the builders of cathedrals, the hewers of stone. His admiration for Chartres, Rouen, Beauvais, Amiens, Saint Michael's Mount, Notre Dame de Paris, amounts to enthusiasm. The

effect upon him of the elaborate flamboyant gate of Rheims, he says, in a bold and happy metaphor, to be as that of the setting sun. He admires the great Assyrian beasts which spread their wings and stretch their limbs in the British Museum, and also those built up by the genial hands of Barye. He has seen Genoa, Siena, Naples, Florence, and Rome, and from each he has brought back some undying impression. But he is further the implacable foe of imitators and restorers, of the professors of æsthetics.

A familiarity with literature and rural landscape, the perpetual observation of humanity, an amazing power of fixing fleeting attitudes, a knowledge of anatomy that enables him to keep account of the most unconscious movements of his models, such are some of the forces of Rodin's mind, some of the characteristics of his work. Like all great artists, his genius is open to definition : it is a personality wrestling with the powers of nature.

GUSTAVE GEFFROY.





XAVIÈRE [*]

II

THE CHEESE JAR

Indecision was my uncle's strongest characteristic. In the most trivial matters he would hesitate and delay, if he could find the least excuse for deferring judgment. His eagerness to avoid conflict or struggle, his reluctance to declare himself finally for or against, rose, no doubt, in a measure from the precarious state of his health, which had been gradually undermined, ever since his forty-second year, by an insidious form of phthisis. But it was no less due to the equally precarious state of his mind, ravaged by a mass of harassing ideas, that drove him hither and thither, and unfitted him for resolute action, or prompt exercise of will. The fervent religious sense with which his whole soul was unduly penetrated, was a further source of enervation. His moral being had been purified to attenuation, his energy whittled away by an excess of scrupulosity.

The moment for action had come, and as usual, he was turning the

(*) See *Art and Letters* for August, vol. III, p. 121.

matter over in his mind, analysing motives, arguing and weighing to his own complete discomfiture.

"Make haste to help me, O God! *Domine ad adjuvandum me festina!*—— Shew me the light of thy countenance, *Lumen vultus tui, Domine!*" I heard him murmur, fairly worn out with fatigue, distress, and perplexity.

Strange to say, his whole nature seemed changed directly he had to deal with some purely ecclesiastical point. He had a deep sense of the loftiness of his sacred calling, the grandeur of the mission entrusted to him from above, and this inspired him with extraordinary courage. His just wrath if one of his flock neglected to attend mass or to bring his children to the catechising and vespers was prompt and imposing enough. These lapses he looked upon as personal affronts, addressed to himself primarily, but through him to God, and his rebukes for such offences were stern and unsparing; unless, indeed, he judged a milder course to be more effectual in certain instances, when he would win back the erring sheep to the fold with words of heavenly tenderness, drawing it homewards with the invisible cords of a pitying love.

The day after the memorable evening when Pope Pius VII. and his dog Misericors, Benoîte Ouradou and her daughter Xavière, had successively made such havoc of our feelings, my uncle came down with his usual smile on his lips, repeating, his heart full of gratitude for his night's rest : "*Benedicamus Domino! Benedicamus Domino!*"

Dressing in my alcove, I listened to the calm accents with which he repeated his matins in the dining-room, and concluded that the impressions of the night before must have ceased to occupy his mind.

As I went through to the kitchen to say my prayers with Prudence, my brain still heavy with my morning sleep, my uncle raised his bright dark eyes over the gilt edges of his breviary, and fixed them on me. His glance fell on me as palpably as a touch of his hand. It was against the rules for me to speak to him while he was repeating his office; but I could not resist the strong impulse of that momentary attraction, and with a beaming face I went up to him, and said softly :

"Good morning, uncle."

"Good morning, my child," he said, adjusting the violet marker between the pages of his book, and closing it.

Then he turned to the window, and pointed to the shining panes sparkling in the morning sunshine.

"In the space of a night God has renewed the face of the earth," said he, in the high emphatic voice I was accustomed to hear from him in the pulpit. "Yesterday God hid His face from us, and the world was threatened with ruin, but to-day He looks down upon us once more, and the whole earth rejoices, radiant and beautiful as before. Truly may we sing with David : *A facie Domini mota est terra.*"

I stood staring at my uncle in amazement. Then he had forgotten all about Xavière, and Benoîte Ouradou, and Landry, and the schoolmaster, whilst I had been dreaming of them all night and had risen with my mind still full of them.

"And what of Xavière?" I murmured.

I spoke so softly that I suppose he did not hear me, for he began at once to pour out what was in his own mind.

"I shall take advantage of this lovely day to have a walk among the chestnut woods at Fonjouve, and prepare my letter to Pannetier. I will take you, my child. You must bring two or three well-sharpened pencils and a few sheets of paper. And you may as well add a slice of bread, for, should my letter keep me longer than I expect, we might go on to the farm at Les Passettes, and get the Arribases to give us a cup of milk. What do you say? Do you feel inclined to make a pilgrimage to the mountains this fine day?"

"Oh, uncle!" I exclaimed, in high glee.

"And though it is your holiday to-day—that Thursday you boys all delight in—I think you had better slip your Virgil into your pocket. Whilst I am writing, you can learn by heart those first ten verses of the episode of Nisus and Euryalus in the *Æneid* which I explained to you the other day." He began to declaim :

Nisus erat portæ custos, acerrimus armis,
Hyrtacides——

"Yes, yes, uncle," I repeated eagerly.

"And now to ensure the safe carrying out of our plan, I must enjoin certain precautions. You know Prudence, you know her kind heart. She will, perhaps, be surprised to see us setting off for the Jougla, or Fonjouve, or Bataillo, just now, whilst she is so full of the Ouradous and the Landriniers. Now, I have quite made up my mind to protect Xavière and Landry, and to defend the poor children from parents who are, indeed, much too severe. But though life is short, we still have time to turn round, and neither Benoîte nor the schoolmaster shall lose anything by waiting. And there is something still more pressing just at this moment, which is the letter I must write to my friend, Augustin Pannetier, of Rongas, near Saint-Gervais. I should not like to be the last of his fellow-labourers to congratulate him, to 'magnify him' as the Scriptures say."

"And what has happened to your friend, Augustin Pannetier, of Rongas, near Saint-Gervais?"

"So do not say a word to Prudence about our expedition," he went on, heedless of my question. "Shall we go up the Jougla towards the Bassacs' sheepfolds, or to the Fonjouve district near the fountain? Or shall we go to the rock of Bataillo, close to the village of Les Passettes? I can hardly make up my mind. We will just take the first path that comes and follow it up."

"Yes, yes, that will be the best, uncle."

"Now, listen to me. After you have said your prayers, take your food as usual, and then go and ring for mass. I will join you in the church almost immediately. After I have said mass, we will slip off, without any sounding of trumpets, and the trick will be done."

He rubbed his hands, chuckling to himself.

"Oh, no, you must not think of such a thing, you can't go off without any breakfast, without your Arabian 'racahout,' which Doctor Barascut ordered you to take, and which is so good for your chest."

"Oh! but we are going to have a holiday! I shall do without the racahout for once in a way."

"No, uncle, I can't let you do that. Now, listen to *my* plan. You know Prudence always stays to tell her beads during the mass. While she is busy with her chaplet, we will hurry back here. Your bowl of racahout

will be all ready, and you must just drink it down. Meanwhile I will cut a thick slice off the loaf, and carry off two of the little cheeses from the jar. They are so good now, after lying there among the walnut leaves. Then we will take to our heels."

My uncle kissed me, brimming over with ill-suppressed merriment.

"Agreed, my child. Hush! not a word more!"

I found Prudence already kneeling on the hearth, her back bent, her eyes fixed on the door, for all the world like our cat, Cascaret, when he is angry. She had been waiting some time to begin the prayers, and was becoming impatient. I placed myself beside her, and, making the sign of the cross, she commenced in her quavering voice : "Holy Spirit, come down upon us, illumine our souls with thy divine light——"

That day, the fourth of October, was the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. To my great dismay, my uncle, who had a particular affection for the saint, prolonged the office fully ten minutes in his honour. The deliberation of the good curé's gestures, the lengthy emphasis of his words, his inward ejaculations, and liftings up of soul, made me tingle all over with impatience. Those extra ten minutes would give Prudence time to come to the end of her devotions, and all would be lost. My uncle bustled in at last and swallowed his racahout in three gulps, without a morsel of bread; I was busy flinging back into the jar the walnut leaves from which I had just extricated two exquisitely ripe mellow cheeses, when suddenly the latch was lifted, and the door swung back against the stone mantelpiece with a bang! Prudence!

"Ah, I have caught you thieving, have I?" she exclaimed, raising her stick and brandishing it over us, half-mechanically, no doubt, as if we were indeed malefactors taken red-handed. My uncle and I, greatly alarmed, trembled before her, helpless and cowardly. She closed the door, and sensible perhaps of the unseemliness of further threats, laid her stick aside, and stood confronting us, fixing us with eyes so sharp and relentless that they seemed to me like two nails piercing my flesh.

We stared back at her as if petrified. Prudence presently laid hold

of the two cheeses with her wrinkled, claw-like old hand and stirring the walnut leaves in the jar, deposited them afresh. She was about to put the jar back in its place, when my uncle, breaking the yoke from off his neck with desperate courage, advanced upon her.

"Leave those cheeses on the table," he commanded.

"And pray what for?" she retorted.

"Because I bid you."

"But Monsieur le Curé——"

"I am master, by the grace of God."

"Yes, but if I did not look after things a little, all the victuals in the house would soon find their way into the hundred or so of gaping jaws in this parish."

"Prudence, all I have belongs first to God's poor and afterwards to me. Are you not, yourself, always ready to help the needy? How many times have you denied yourself to be able to give a basin of peas or a bit of cold omelette to Adolphe Landrinier?"

"Well, but what is it you want to be doing?" she asked.

"Nothing very extraordinary. I am only thinking of taking a good walk with my nephew in the direction of Fonjouve. Yesterday, I saw Doctor Barascut at Bédarieux, and he particularly desired me to take plenty of exercise, and even to climb the mountains, because the air is so much purer on a height."

"So you were carrying off my cheeses to eat by the Fonjouve fountain."

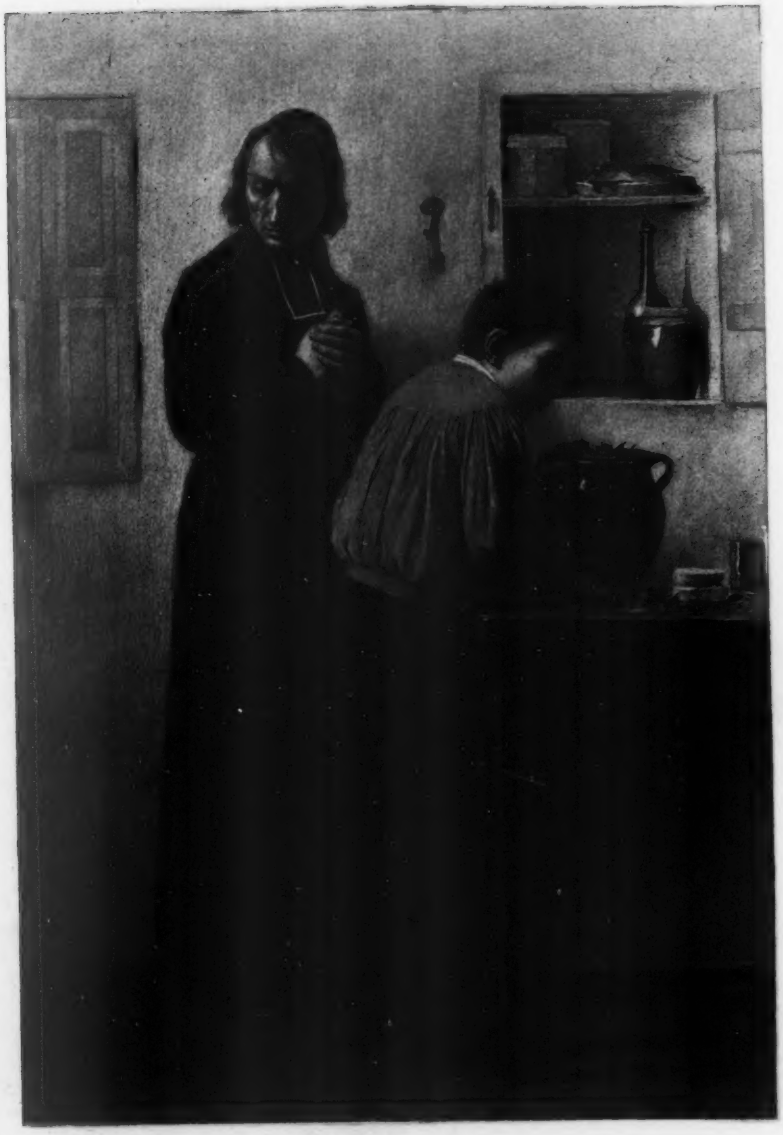
"Precisely, good Prudence."

"Oh, well, I will see about that for you," she said, almost graciously.

She reached down a little basket that hung on the wall, opened the cupboard, took out the jar she had replaced, and began to pack up a variety of things in a snowy napkin. We gazed at her, dumbfounded.

"There," she said at last. "I have put you in three cheeses, some bread, and three hard boiled eggs I had prepared for the dish of tripe I was going to cook you. The hard eggs are very good eaten with a little salt. And I have given you a small bottle of Frontignan——"

The postman appeared in the open doorway at this juncture.



"Colas," said Prudence, breaking off in her inventory, "M. le Curé is in haste to be off, and I am as busy as a bee. You must do without your glass of wine to-day. Besides, the air is very fresh, you can hardly be thirsty."

We took in the *Réveil Catholique de Lyon*, the principal contributor to which was M. le Chanoine Philibert Tulipier, Quai de la Pêcherie, No. 3. It was a publication of much merit, full of information from the first line to the last, reliable and well written. Nevertheless, it would sometimes lie untouched in its wrapper, so absorbed was my uncle generally, in burrowing among the one hundred and nine volumes of the "Library of the Clergy and the Learned Laity," edited by M. l'Abbé Migne of Paris. Poor *Réveil Catholique de Lyon!* how many pots of jam have I not covered with numbers that had never even been cut!

But this morning my uncle seized the *Réveil*—it came out twice a week, Tuesdays and Fridays—and hastily tore off the wrapper. He ran his eye down the first column and uttered a loud exclamation. Prudence and I hurried to him.

"What is the matter?" we asked, in alarm.

"I could scarcely believe our *Doyen* of Bédarieux," he gasped, "but it is quite true, it seems, perfectly true."

"What is perfectly true, uncle?"

"Here, my child, read these three lines—I cannot see clearly."

I took the paper and read : "We learn from the *Moniteur Universel*, that, by a royal decree, dating from September 25, M. l'Abbé Pannetier, Augustin-Aristide-Simon, almoner of the Carmelite Monastery at Montpellier, has been nominated Bishop of Mireval."

"M. Pannetier who once came and held a mission here?" asked Prudence.

"Yes, the very same, the very same, the very same." My uncle repeated the words three times in his perplexity.

He jumped up like a bird about to take wing. I passed my arm through the handle of the basket, and rushed after him.



SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI IN THE FIELDS

The road we struck into on leaving the *Presbytère,* the road which, according to our own convention, was to decide our further course, was the picturesque little street known as the "Coopers' Lane." It was an ill-paved winding alley, with a row of somewhat black, decrepit-looking houses on the left, and on the right a fine thorn hedge, still fresh and verdant, spite of the advanced season. Looking across this green wall, the whole panorama of St. Sauveur, the Jougla, Fonjouve, and even the rock of Bataillo lay before our eyes. We hurried along, not even pausing to exchange greetings with our neighbours, turning our backs on Cornaz, who sat hammering at a shoe by his open casement, and feigning not to see Verdier, who stood directing the manufacture of his casks and tubs.

"Where are you off to in such a hurry, Monsieur le Curé?" cried the Mayor's coadjutor, for such was Verdier, "are you carrying the blessed Sacrament to some one at Les Passettes?"

I know not whether my uncle heard or not. He certainly did not reply, but gathering up his cassock in one hand for greater freedom as he walked, he strode firmly on, making straight for the Minier brook, the joyous bubblement of which was now distinctly audible.

It was a lovely stream, racing along a narrow ravine, under a luxuriant growth of tufted reeds and slender, silver-stemmed birch-trees. The water looked more limpid than usual that morning, and it was literally fresh

water, for the brook is fed from the Fonjouve fountain, and this, which had been dried up in the summer heat, had begun to flow again, now that the rain had come at last.

"I don't think you would be able to snare the linnets and goldfinches here now, as you used to do in the little pools last July, my child," said my uncle.

"Oh, no," I replied, "the stream would carry away my snares and lime now."

He paused, a little out of breath, by the hollow we had to go down into before crossing the stream.

"Every season has its beauty," he said slowly, "the cold of winter, the genial warmth of spring, the summer drought, the autumn rain, are alike the works of God, who guides the world by His will for the good of man, His chosen creature. If it be not presumptuous in a mortal so feeble and insignificant as I feel myself in the presence of universal nature to express my preferences, I must admit that I love the autumn best of all the seasons. The winter shakes me terribly, the spring fills me with a painful languor, the summer heats oppress me cruelly, and the autumn makes me feel like a sucker in which the sap begins to swell afresh. It is sad to think that human selfishness can thus mingle itself even with the contemplation of that sublime order with which the great Master in the beginning informed all the works of His hand. Mighty is the love of life in man, first and most imperious of promptings, ineradicable even when he has climbed to the sublimest heights, and perfected himself in every virtue."

Two logs laid side by side and held by an iron chain at either end formed a bridge across the Minier. As we passed over the stream, a flight of redbreasts among which I detected the glossy heads of several blackcaps dashed past us, almost brushing our faces. My uncle stopped short, and gazing at the birds as they followed the course of the stream, he began to call to them : "Psit! Psit!" he called, in a long whistle.

But redbreasts, and blackcaps continued their flight towards the Jougla.

"Ah," he lamented, looking much distressed, "the birds do not know me, though this morning in my prayers I invoked Saint Francis of Assisi

with my whole soul, and begged him to help me follow in his footsteps."

"Did they know *him,* then?"

"Yes, St. Francis was the friend of every living creature, and more especially of the birds, with which he loved to talk when he ceased exhorting men."

"What! he talked with birds?"

"Listen to the lines I learned by heart in the life of the blessed St. Francis by St. Bonaventura : *Legenda major beati Francisci a sancto Bonaventura edita et ab Ecclesia approbata.*"

We had gained the summit that sloped up from the bed of the Minier. My uncle sat down on a flat stone, close to a great bramble bush laden with ripe berries, that shone in the sun like tiny morsels of coal just dug from the Brochin mine at Graissessac. He was silent for a few minutes. And as I waited for him to get his breath, I amused myself by stripping the brambles and devouring the ripe berries.

At last he beckoned me. I was all attention in a moment.

"This is the fragment from St. Bonaventura," he said. And he recited the following with much rhetorical effect :

"One day our saint found himself in a solitary place near Bevagna, where hundreds of birds of every colour had assembled. Running up to them, he saluted them as if they were reasonable beings. They all stood waiting for him, turning to meet him, those perched in high places bending their heads to see and hear him. 'Birds, my brothers,' he said, 'sing praises to your Creator who has covered you with warm feathers to keep you from the cold, has given you wings with which to fly, has spread the pure air all around you, and governs you without your having to take thought for yourselves.'

"While he spoke to them in these and similar words, the birds seemed to tremble with delight; they stretched out their necks, opened their beaks, and kept their eyes fixed on him. As he spoke he moved about among them, brushing them with his gown, and not one of them stirred. At last he dismissed them by making the sign of the cross over them."

"How poetical!" I cried.

"Sometimes, when I am wandering in the country, as I ought to do

more often, a paragraph from the 'Life of the Blessed Saint Francis' comes into my mind. I repeat it softly to myself, and it helps me to a better understanding of, a fuller sympathy with, the nature around me. And at this very moment the landscape looks more lovely than before to me, because I have told you the story of the birds."

He rose, and clasping his hands laid them on his breast.

"Oh! my parish!" he exclaimed, casting his eyes around, "blessed corner, patrimony given me by God that in it I might sow the good seed and cause it to spring up from the furrows, how sparkling, how gay, how radiant you look in the sunshine that has thrown its golden mantle over you! Look, my child, see how the great chestnut woods up on the heights of Fonjouve are blazing with gold and jewels!"

I could not enter fully into his emotion, but his fervour stirred me deeply.

"Do you see? Do you see?"

"Yes, yes, uncle, I see, I see——"

I was conscious of a strange sensation. My eyelids seemed to open more freely, all obscurities seemed to roll away. The landscape before me was clothed in a new splendour. The soul of my loving companion entered into my own, taking possession of me, bearing me up, beyond the clouds, beyond mortal ken.

"Dear uncle, talk to me, teach me," I said suddenly, vibrating with sympathy, eager to share his transports.

But my uncle stood speechless and motionless, save that every now and then he turned his head to glance round in twenty different directions, to the right towards Fonjouve and the rock of Bataillo, to the left towards the Jougla, and to Saint-Sauveur and the Aire-Raymond beyond.

As he thus gazed, drinking in the scene with eager admiration, I followed his every glance. His fervour had so infected me, that I seemed to stand on the same intellectual level with him, to see, not with my own eyes, but with his. At that moment, our whole being was as completely in harmony with the smiling nature round us, as that of two redbreasts or blackcaps, and the fusion of our identities was such, that each word or sigh or gesture that fell from him was exactly echoed by me. Yes, we were of one mind and one soul, and drinking in together the subtle

magic of nature, we were conscious of an exaltation at once sweet and bewildering.

We moved forward at last almost mechanically, following the interminable thorn hedge that separates the Jougla from Fonjouve. The sun was hot, but, compared to the burning glare of summer, his touches felt like kisses on our cheeks and hands. My uncle, his back somewhat bent, walked a little ahead of me, and spoke not a word. An infinite silence seemed to stretch out before us, broken only by the occasional thud of a prickly green ball that fell from the branches above us, and, bursting on the pebbly path, cast two or three glossy young chestnuts at our feet. The groves of fruitful trees rose before us as far as the eye could reach, and between their trunks the soil was covered with the fallen hulls as with a carpet, the nuts shining here and there among the bristled capsules. What a splendid crop we were going to have!

At last we parted company with the great thorn hedge. It turned sharply off from us, and began to climb at right angles towards the Jougla heights, while we went our way towards Fonjouve.

"Les Passettes is quite a picture from here," said my uncle.

From where we stood, we commanded the full sweep of the Espase. I fixed my eyes on the scattered houses of the hamlet. The orchard foliage had felt the first touch of autumn, and the slate roofs shewed sharply through the branches, sparkling like steel in the sunshine. Beyond Les Passettes, towards the rock of Bataillo, the chestnut woods, broken by the little open glade where nestled the half-dozen cottages and farms, massed themselves again, and filled the horizon with clumps of russet and gold, darkening as they receded, till, in the far distance, they seemed to us of a dense black. The foliage was still thick and bushy; it lay rigid and motionless, in the windless calm, like piles of many-coloured stones; mountain rose above mountain, boulder above boulder. Beyond the chestnuts of Bataillo stretched those of the Jougla, then those of Saint-Sauveur, then those of the Aire-Raymond, and the landscape, hemmed in by the far-stretching woods, looked as if imprisoned in a huge circus of strata rising high above each other, which walled it in for ever, without hope of escape.

"They are all alike, those scientists," says my uncle suddenly, making the valedictory gesture with which in the pulpit he pronounces the "Grace be with you."

"What scientists?" I ask.

"Well, M. Fuzien-Grimoldas of Montpellier, for one."

"Is M. Fuzien-Grimoldas of Montpellier a scientist?"

"He has the reputation. He is for ever burrowing among the towns and villages of the diocese. In one place, he will pull a foot-rule out of his pocket, and measure the curve of an arch; in another, he will take a little hammer out of his bag, and set to work breaking stones in the open country like a wayside labourer. What is the object of all this hammering and measuring? I confess myself very ignorant of all those purely human sciences, in which God's providence is made of no account. I understand nothing of this man's explorations—they say he is a Protestant—and though he has been pleased to turn his attention to my parish, I have vowed never to open one of his books."

"Does he say anything about Camplong in his books, then?"

"You see the exquisite beauty of the nature around us? You see the majesty of those vast chestnut groves that rise from the banks of the Espase to the very clouds? M. Fuzien-Grimoldas has gazed on this scene too. But far from feeling his heart stirred with gratitude as ours have been at the sight of these gifts of the Divine Hand, M. Fuzien-Grimoldas made but one comment on our district, and that one a blasphemy."

"Well, if he is a Protestant—— But what was it he said, uncle?"

"The phrase was quoted to me by the Abbé Monestier, my respected predecessor in this parish, and now *Curé-Doyen* of Mèze, near the pond of Thau."

"And what was the phrase, uncle?"

"I think I can repeat it word for word: 'Camplong, with its dense chestnut woods, spreading from the plateau of Lurzac to the mountains of the Espinouze, strikes the tourist as curiously pagan in its physiognomy.'"

"Pagan? Why pagan?"

"I cannot tell you, I hardly think he could tell you himself, poor

unhappy archæologist, mineralogist, naturalist, or whatever he may be, for the folks who carry on M. Fuzien-Grimoldas' investigations with hammers and measures are called by all of those names. But within the last few years the Abbé Monestier has written a pamphlet, in which he triumphantly refutes the opinions of the archæologist, and the sage of Montpellier has made no sort of reply. Further, M. le Chanoine Philibert Tulipier reviewed the Abbé's work in the *Réveil Catholique de Lyon,* and took occasion to maul poor M. Fuzien-Grimoldas most unmercifully—— I must tell you, that after his great discovery of 'pagan landscape,' the unhappy scientist proceeded to scatter absurdities broadcast over the pages of his work, which he called : 'An archæological excursion among the hills of Orb——'"

My uncle's sense of amusement here got the better of him, and he broke off with a merry laugh. I laughed too, convinced that M. Fuzien-Grimoldas, of Montpellier, was the most foolish and ridiculous of archæologists, mineralogists, and naturalists!

"A pagan landscape! a pagan landscape! a pagan landscape!" cried my uncle, still convulsed.

"A pagan landscape! a pagan landscape! a pagan landscape!" I echoed, no less gleefully.

And we laughed again in chorus.

"You know the Fonjouve fountain up above, among Benoîte Ouradou's chestnuts, about a hundred yards from here? The egregious Fuzien-Grimoldas, not content with his own hammer, was in the habit of employing a peasant to scratch up the soil with a pick. He announced the discovery of a piece of granite, on which were carved two words, the first legible enough, *Fons,* fountain, the second obliterated but for the initial letter *J;* the antiquary, possessed by his pagan or Protestant fancies, jumps to the conclusion that the inscription should be read : FONS JOVIS, 'Fountain of Jupiter,' and thence he would derive the name of the district, Fonjouve. Was ever argument more absurd, more far-fetched, more anti-Christian?"

"Never, never," I agree.

"But I must admit that the Abbé Monestier's refutation of this subtle point seems to me rather weak. 'As you have nothing but a *J* to go

upon,' he says, 'why must you necessarily conclude that the *J* stands for Jupiter rather than for any other word, such for instance as *Juventutis* (youth). Why should not your fountain prove to be not the 'Fountain of Jupiter,' but the 'Fountain of Youth?' Now, *I* am not at all well disposed towards this 'Fountain of Youth,' which, to my mind, savours quite as much of paganism as the 'Fountain of Jupiter,' and here the pious Chanoine Tulipier is with me.

"'This *J*,' he writes, at the close of his article in the *Réveil,* 'is doubtless the first letter of the Name of our Blessed Redeemer. The fountain of the hills of Orb, in the Southern Cévennes, is neither a 'Fountain of Jupiter,' nor a 'Fountain of Youth,' but the 'Fountain of Jesus,' and the sacred name, corrupted by the ignorance of centuries, has come to be bestowed upon a whole district.'"

"That, uncle, is something like an argument. Anybody could understand that!"

"But we must be getting on, my child. I must not allow M. Fuzien-Grimoldas to make me forget my friend, Monseigneur Augustin Pannetier, Bishop designate of Mireval."

We hastened forward.



THE CHESTNUT WOOD OF FONJOUVE

Aire-Raymond, Saint-Sauveur, the Jougla, Bataillo, can all boast fine chestnuts, mighty of trunk, and sturdy of branch, but those of Fonjouve bear away the palm. There is nothing to compare with them at all in our district of the Cévennes. From the enormous stems, gnarled, rugged, and panoplied in the bark of generations, the giant arms stretch out in thousands, terminating in long, crooked fingers, laden with leaves and fruit. Nature, the kindly nurse, scatters food on man from the bountiful hands of the forest.

Striking into a narrow, tortuous pathway, my uncle began to search among the primeval groves of Fonjouve for a suitable spot wherein to compose his letter. He wanted a corner where he would be screened from the direct rays of the sun, still somewhat ardent, yet it must not be too shady a spot, nor one where the north wind, which always blows briskly on the heights, could rush in to scatter his ideas. How indeed, would he be able to accomplish his congratulations to Monseigneur Augustin Pannetier, Bishop designate of Mireval, if he should be suddenly seized with one of his too familiar fits of coughing?

We were now in the very heart of Benoîte Ouradou's property, for the greater part of Fonjouve belonged to her. Now and then we heard the sharp report of the hulls, as we inadvertently trod upon the fruit. The chestnuts were scattered thickly on the bare ground, in the cracks of the boulders, everywhere. As I walked heedlessly along, my basket under my arm, I could not but admire the care with which my uncle

picked his way, now skipping into the air, now taking a tremendous stride to avoid touching the nuts even with the tips of his boots.

"Take care, take care, my child," he called out repeatedly.

"But uncle, there are such quantities of chestnuts at Fonjouve."

"That is no reason for wasting or spoiling a single one. A handful of chestnuts in the wallet of some such poor fellow as Joseph Lasserre of Les Passettes is a provision for the whole day. In the sublime prose of the *Lauda Sion,* St. Thomas Aquinas tells us, speaking of the Eucharistic Bread, that as all goods come to us as the gifts of God, not the least morsel of them should be cast to the dogs, *non mittendus canibus.* Ah! here is a tree for me."

He pointed to the patriarch of the Fonjouve woods, and indeed of the whole district for many miles in the Cévennes; it formed a sort of woody monument; the thick bark was split into crevices vast enough to hide in; the huge knots on the trunk formed a kind of staircase. Great stems rose side by side like massed columns, divided for a space, then pressed shoulder to shoulder again. In the lapse of centuries, ten chestnuts had clasped each other, and become as one. Above, the twisted branches, green with mosses and lichens, formed a thick canopy, and interlacing, seemed like a solid vaulted roof, thatched with verdure, through which the stray sunbeams filtered; I looked up, and among the topmost leaves, a goldfinch darted and fluttered. Startled at our arrival, he paused, perched on a hanging twig, darted his pretty head between two half-open hulls, looked at us enquiringly for a second, then, with a musical cry that fell from above, clear and limpid as a drop of water from the fountain of Fonjouve, he was gone.

My uncle seemed lost in an admiring reverie. He drew a long breath, and turning to me, began to unburden himself.

"Each time I pass by here on my way to Les Passettes, each time I see this tree, the branches of which might shelter a whole village, people and flocks, I think of the olive groves of the Holy Land, so beautifully described by M. de Chateaubriand in his *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem,* and by the Chanoine Tulipier in his interesting book, *Voyage au pays du Sauveur.* It seems to me comprehensible enough that the

soil near Calvary and Bethlehem, that blessed soil which was watered by the sweat and by the blood of our Divine Master, should be clothed with abnormal vegetation, should nourish trees of exceptional vigour and endurance, fortified from their very infancy against all the variations of climate. But it is mysterious enough to find these Cévennes hills of ours dowered with the same miraculous virtue, though the feet of the Saviour have never pressed them, though their children find it so hard to know and to choose the true paths."

As he declaimed these phrases in a sonorous voice, he climbed a sort of staircase formed at the base of the great tree by the knotted roots that burst through the soil, and seated himself in a hollow of the trunk, a cleft over which the bark had healed, cushioned softly as an arm-chair with wild mallows.

"Have you the pencils, little one?" he asked.

"Yes, uncle, here they are."

"And the paper?"

"Yes, uncle, the paper, too."

"Here, give them to me quickly, I feel myself quite in the vein."

I lifted the lid of the basket. What a good smell of cheese, eggs, and wine! I handed my uncle the pencils and the paper.

"Now, my child, take your Virgil, and go some little distance off. It is hard to send you away, but when I am composing I must be quite alone. My ideas are put to flight more easily than the redbreasts of the Minier—— I commend to your attention the first ten verses of the episode of Nisus and Euryalus—— Run away, and set to work."

To hide myself behind a great tree-trunk and work as I might do at our round table at home was easy enough, of course, but it was not very amusing. My uncle was a fervent admirer of Virgil, and I made valiant attempts to share his enthusiasm, but in my character of very backward fourteen-year-old urchin I was fain to admit to myself that I found Virgil of all poets the most difficult to "explain," not to say the most wearisome. I thought of my long struggles with the flocks and shepherds of the *Eclogues,* of my bewildered encounters with the

swarming bees of the *Georgics*, of my positive terror at the flying javelins of the twelve cantos of the *Æneid*. Should we ever get to the end of that interminable history of Æneas? It was all easy enough to my uncle, of course. He was borne along, not only by his own enthusiasm for the poet, but by a very carefully interlined translation, tastefully bound in roan, and published by Jules Delalain, Rue des Mathurins, Paris. I knew the work well, having more than once borrowed it clandestinely from its home in the drawer of the *prie-Dieu*. My uncle, as I have said, was calm and untroubled enough during the lesson-hour; harassed by no difficulties, his words and gestures expressed his perfect ease and enjoyment. But I was in a very different plight, sinking ever deeper into the mire of perplexity, breathless under the yoke, encountering some fresh obstacle at every step. In vain did my good uncle strive to stimulate me to fresh efforts in these crises of my struggles with rebellious Latinity by some such phrase as :

"You know, I look upon Virgil as a Christian poet, quite a Christian poet." I was as unresponsive to these touches of the whip as some jaded hack of our Cévenol stables. Worn out with fatigue and despair, I all but fell down in the shafts.

As I walked briskly along, chewing the cud of these unpleasant memories, I reached the bounds of Benoîte Ouradou's property, and found myself close to the Fonjouve fountain, the stream from which separates Camplong and Les Passettes. I was so much accustomed to the constant companionship of my uncle or of Prudence, that my present solitude inspired me with an uneasy feeling, almost of terror. I turned hastily back, and peered through the close-set chestnut trunks.

I had not advanced so high as I supposed, and it was with a sensation of relief that I was able to make out the figure of my dear uncle, sitting motionless in his green stall, his cassock a black patch against the verdure. A smaller white patch caught my eye, too, scarcely perceptible at first, but finally resolving itself into the sheet of paper on which was taking form the rough draft of the letter to Monseigneur Augustin Pannetier, Bishop designate of Mireval. I wondered how far the famous letter had advanced, for of course it would be something

out of the common, a masterpiece such as he had composed on the captivity of Pius VII. at Fontainebleau. Fired by the thought of all my uncle's wisdom, my heart full of good resolutions, I laid hands valiantly on the Virgil, and drew it out of the basket. I was determined to obey my uncle to the letter. By some sudden freak of memory, the first couplet of the Nisus and Euryalus episode rose to my lips, and I found myself declaiming the hexameters to the very end, in exact imitation of the Curé. Not with any satirical intention—far from it—my one thought was to follow in his footsteps.

Nisus erat portæ custos acerrimus armis——

The verses came trippingly from my tongue, without any conscious effort—and only the evening before not all my teacher's patient encouragement had sufficed to draw one syllable from me!

Meanwhile, as I fluttered the pages of the *Æneid* in search of the ninth canto, I lighted instead on the fourth eclogue, *Pollio!* Oh! that terrible *Pollio!* What hours we had spent over it! About six months before, *Pollio* had pervaded the Camplong Presbytère for about a week.

By way of stimulating my zeal, my uncle had provided me with a companion or rival in my studies, Prosper Arribas of Les Passettes, who, at Easter, had betaken himself to the "Little Seminary" of Saint-Pons in the Montagne-Noire. I can see the pair of us now, seated at the walnut table, bewildered, amazed, open-mouthed, as our instructor harangued us in truly marvellous fashion!

According to my uncle, Virgil, or "Virgilius Maro," as he loved to call him, might claim a place among the Prophets of Holy Writ. Like Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea, Virgilius Maro had proclaimed the approaching advent of the Saviour. There was no other possible interpretation of his words. In the midst of pagan darkness, a heavenly light had been vouchsafed to the poet, *lumen in cælo,* and the illumined Mantuan had penned his *Pollio,* in which the veil had been withdrawn from the future, and the new order clearly predicted.

"Listen, my children, listen!" And placing himself before us, drawn up to his full height to impress us more deeply, he scanned the following,



syllable by syllable, for our edification, in a voice naturally feeble, but swelling for the moment to abnormal depth and sonority :

Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas,
Magnus ab integro sæculorum nascitur ordo.

After a few seconds' pause he gave us the following, perhaps over-free, translation :

"We have now reached that last period of paganism predicted by the Sibyl of Cumæ. Jesus comes, and a new order is at hand."

"Ah! my uncle, my dear uncle!" I murmured aloud in my solitude, touched to the heart by swift and tender memories.

And laying my fingers on my lips, I sent him a kiss through the long chestnut aisles.

Thus preoccupied, I had wandered some distance, and presently found myself not far from the Fonjouve fountain, the distant gurgle of which I could now hear—not far either from Benoîte Ouradou's drying-house for her chestnuts, built among the bare boulders against the road to Les Passettes. I halted under the first shelter of an interminable avenue of ashes, that followed the water-course from the spring to the very bottom of the valley of the Espase. What a magnificent plantation it was, and what a delicate music came from the light leaves of the ashes stirred by the breeze! It seemed to me like the flutter of the plumage of birds, the whirr of their wings, the sudden twitter of one, then of a thousand little throats. The ash is so much more delicate, more cheerful even in its density than the chestnut, which has, to my mind, a touch of gloom and moroseness in its majesty. The sun-dappled shadow of the ashes is so infinitely more attractive. They make up in grace for what they lack in dignity. Meditating thus, I chose a resting-place between two stems, whence I could still trace my uncle's figure in the distance, and glancing round, I presently made out, on the other side of the stream, close to the Fonjouve fountain, the flocks of M. Vincent Bassac, mayor of the Commune of Camplong. I recognized the great merino ram "Caramba" by the pointed horns that curled round his ears. But I could see only the sheep. Where was the shepherd? The

animals were guarded by two dogs, who drove them back when they shewed an inclination to cross the stream and feast on the chestnuts that lay thickly scattered on the ground in the Fonjouve groves. Languidly nibbling the scanty herbage watered by the little rills that feed the Minier stream, the creatures raised their heads every minute to glance with a comical expression of baffled gluttony at Benoîte Ouradou's chestnut groves. I wondered why they did not cross the water and throw themselves on the prey. After all, they were three hundred to two. The idea made me uncomfortable. I thought I would shout to Galibert as loudly as I could. He was there, no doubt, watching his flock from some hidden retreat.

At that moment a most singular noise, a sort of long broken murmur, like the snoring of a man, or the snuffle of an animal, reached my ears from the hollow of the stream.

I leant forward, staring with all my eyes. Nothing. Only the Minier chattering to the blossoms on its banks. Yet I still heard—— Ah! Yes!—— There was Galibert, and in the oddest posture!

APOLLO WITH ADMETUS

The Bassacs' shepherd lay about a stone's throw from me, buried among the tufts of wild sage and rosemary that clothed the pebbly soil of a shelving strip of fallow land that skirted the Espase. Not far from him rose a clump of medlar-trees, under which he might have sought shelter. But he had chosen to take his siesta in the full blaze of the mid-day sun.

Keeping well behind the cover of the ash-trees, I stole cautiously down to the Minier. An irresistible curiosity took possession of me. I wanted to examine him more closely. Creeping on tiptoe, I reached his side.

Galibert was sleeping soundly and peacefully, his eyes shaded by the broad brim of a coarse straw hat. His shirt was thrown open at the throat, and his bare breast rose and fell with a steady motion. His even breathing stirred the short hairs of his lips and chin. Before lying down, he had flung off his serge jacket among the bushes close by, and his sole clothing was a pair of sabots, and trousers of coarse canvas.

His long shepherd's crook, cut from a supple chestnut sapling, lay along his side, reaching beyond his head, and clasped by his delicately curved right hand. Some passer-by, on the way to Les Passettes, seeing him thus motionless, might take it into his head to fling a stone or otherwise attack him, so he had kept his trusty weapon within reach.

As I gazed at him, sleeping peacefully among his flock, I could but admire him. He looked so magnificent in his squalor, bathed in the sunlight and the flickering streaks of shadow from the medlar-trees. Of course I knew him to be one of the most good-for-nothing rogues in the parish, and his escapades kept M. le Curé and his housekeeper ever on the watch, nervously defending the young girls of Camplong from his attacks. Galibert, I had heard it darkly whispered, was not content with running openly after all the petticoats in the neighbourhood. He had been known to climb the windows of the farm-houses of the Jougla, Fonjouve, Les Passettes, and Bataillo, like a fox stealing through a crack in the fence, to the ruin of many a poor wench's good name. Perhaps, at this moment, he was resting after the fatigues of some unlawful midnight raid.

"Ah, monster of iniquity!" I muttered, under my breath.

And yet, after all, he did not look so very wicked! As I contemplated him, noting the heavy rings of red hair that, escaping from under his hat, veiled his eyes and strayed across his ruddy, velvety cheeks, shining in the sun like two ripe apples, I began to doubt the truth of those tales of depravity I had listened to, with trembling awe, from the lips of my uncle and of Prudence. Surely, Galibert was not so guilty as the gossips of the country-side declared. Were his heart heavy with the remembrance of all the crimes laid to his charge, could he sleep with this sublime serenity in the open fields? Was there no such thing as the torture of remorse? Oh! it was impossible!

Perhaps M. Fuzien-Grimoldas' "pagan landscape" and Virgilius Maro's fourth bucolic combined had attuned my mind to mythological impressions. However this may be, as I gazed at the Bassacs' shepherd, pillowed on his bed of sage and rosemary, wrapt in the golden light and the soft fall of the stray medlar leaves, he seemed, to my fascinated eyes, beautiful as Apollo, the loveliest of the gods. Perhaps thus, in some such pose of more than mortal grace and vigour, slept Apollo, when he kept the flocks of Admetus among the hills of Thessaly!——

A strange feeling came over me. Scarcely had the impious thought

crossed my mind—for it was impious to compare Galibert, a Christian, spite of all his errors, to some hideous deity of paganism—when I was seized with a violent trembling of all my limbs. Was I going to fall down, right on the top of Galibert? Terrified at the bare idea, I seized my basket, which I had laid among the herbs at my feet, and fled for my life.

I am not ashamed to confess that I was very much frightened. As I crossed the stream and made for the chestnut groves once more, I was delighted to see a figure coming along the road to Les Passettes—which winds along the bank of the Minier from the Espase to Fonjouve. It was the cobbler Cornaz' Mélie, a strapping, well-grown lass of eighteen, with a dark complexion, and a down on the upper lip almost like a moustache. I knew her better than most of the girls in the neighbourhood, for she had a fine voice, and was accustomed to come constantly to the Presbytère in company with Xavière Ouradou to practise the hymns, my uncle sometimes chanting with them in a very sympathetic, though rather weak voice, sometimes contenting himself by accompanying them with his accordion. I began to sing :

Aimez Jésus, aimez sa croix,
Aimez aussi la sainte Vierge,
Aimez Jésus, aimez sa croix,
Sur l'autel allumez un cierge.

Mélie looked up at the sound of my voice.

"Where are you off to, Mélie?" I called out.

"I am going to Les Passettes, Monsieur le Neveu."

"What are you going to do at Les Passettes?"

"I am taking a pair of new shoes to the Arribases for Arribassou, who is going back to the seminary at Saint-Pons this evening."

"Yes, I remember. He came to say good-bye to us the other day. Well, tell him from me——"

Before I could finish my sentence, Mélie uttered a piercing shriek, and I saw her in the arms of Galibert, who covered her face with brutal kisses. How had the shepherd managed to fall thus suddenly upon his prey? A minute ago he was sleeping on the bank, and I had noticed

no movement on his part till I saw the girl struggling in his wolfish embrace.

"Uncle, uncle!" I screamed, despairingly.

"Monsieur le Curé!" squeaked Mélie, in chorus.

Galibert, disturbed in his devilish work, relaxed his hold. He whistled to his dogs and sheep, and followed by them, strode off in the direction of the Espase.

"I think," said I to the damsel, severely, "that you might have defended yourself more courageously, and certainly for a girl who sings the contralto in the choir, you called for help feebly enough."

"But sir, I could not help it; he was holding me so tightly, and then, kissing me like that——"

And, Mélie, ashamed, no doubt, of the very evident traces left on her face by the encounter, bent down to pick up the shoes she had dropped, in the shock of Galibert's onslaught, and fled breathlessly toward Les Passettes. As I followed her with my eyes along the path, I thought of our black cat, Cascaret, and compared Galibert very unfavourably with him.

One day last winter I was working in our dining-room. Cascaret, stretched at my feet before the glowing stove, was roasting himself to his heart's content. He was sleeping blissfully, his limbs sprawling on the warm tiles, his face turned towards the little jets of flame that darted through the bars. In an instant, more suddenly than the report of a gun follows on the touching of the trigger, he had sprung across the room, and I saw him crunching a little mouse that had been playing round the doors of our sideboard. Poor little beast! He paid dearly for having believed for a moment in the slumbers of his enemy.

Except that Galibert, thanks to me, and thanks to my uncle, had not succeeded in devouring Cornaz' Mélie, how did his conduct differ from that of Cascaret?

Instead of crossing the Minier, I turned, and began to stroll along the road to Les Passettes. The Fonjouve fountain, which I was nearing, springs from a mass of rock that rises towards the highest point of Benoîte Ouradou's chestnuts. From thence I should be able to see my

uncle. I began to wonder that he had not yet appeared by the brook. What a time the letter to Monseigneur Augustin Pannetier was taking! No doubt it was full of elaborate locutions and original phrases, and my uncle was working away at it with the utmost ardour——

"So you like raw chestnuts, my Xavière?" said a voice beside me, behind the screen of young willows that hid the fountain from my sight, a voice I recognized at once as that of Adolphe Landrinier, or Landry.

I pricked up my ears, and standing stock-still, tried to peer through the leafy curtain.

"Oh, yes, I like them," she replied.

"But you know raw chestnuts are not very wholesome. They are so indigestible; I am afraid they will make you ill."

"Oh, I often eat them."

"Perhaps because you have nothing else to eat——"

Xavière answered not a word. I could see her quite plainly now, her figure standing out against the green wall whence gushed the waters of the spring. Landry was standing close to her, and as I looked, he moved a little nearer.

"Does your mother give you enough to eat?" he asked.

"She gives me soup every day."

"Nothing but soup?"

"Oh, radish soup is not at all bad!"

"I suppose Benoîte puts a lump of bacon with the radishes."

"We had some bacon as thick as all my five fingers together, and as white as curds."

"Well?"

"Well, my mother sold it at the Saint-Gervais fair. She sells everything she possibly can. In the house, in the fields, her one cry is: 'We must make money with this, we must make money with that.'"

"Oh! the miserly creature!"

"Hush! she might hear you!"

"Is she at Fonjouve?"

"She is clearing out the drying-house ready for the crop."

Adolphe looked very much startled. Presently, with a sort of caressing

gesture, he took from Xavière's consenting hand the remainder of a chestnut she had been nibbling.

"So you like raw chestnuts yourself?" she said, smiling.

"Oh! I like this one because you have been biting it with your pretty little teeth," he replied.

And gazing upwards, his eyes luminous with pleasure, he slowly ate the fruit he was sharing with Xavière, that Xavière's lips had touched. The action seemed to fill him with a sort of ecstasy. What was the meaning of it all? Xavière watched him with an expression of rapture no less mysterious and extraordinary.

They were both very slender, but she was slightly taller than he. The sun was now high in the heavens, and their slim young figures cast long, mobile shadows across the basin of the fountain.

Xavière's extended farther than the boy's, its extreme point touched the rock whence gushed the spring. For a while the shadows would lie motionless; then, as the two bent towards each other, the shadows crossed and mingled and seemed to dance in fantastic gambols on the limpid pool.

"I fancy," said Xavière, at last, "that the schoolmaster does not always give you your necessary food, and that, like me and the birds, you sometimes come to satisfy your hunger among the chestnuts."

"Yes, there are often short commons in our house, but then I get so many scraps at the Presbytère——"

"Ah, yes! M. le Curé, and his nephew, and Prudence—— they are like the saints of Paradise!" said Xavière, clasping her hands.

This exclamation of Xavière's made my heart swell with such pleasurable satisfaction that I could no longer contain myself. Bursting through the willow branches, I appeared before them, and throwing open the lids of my basket, I cried excitedly :

"I have cheeses, eggs, fresh rolls, and a bottle of Frontignan, we will have a little feast together."



THE FEAST BY THE FOUNTAIN

Our meal, though simple enough, was very delicious, eaten in this green corner, under the cool shadow of the wild fig-trees that grew in masses from every crevice in the rocks. The broad thick leaves of these shrubs that had never borne fruit formed a sort of canopy over the spring, and creeping downwards, mingled their rough strong textures with the glossy green of the ivy and wove a garland round our heads, a crown above our brows. We ate away merrily, enjoying our meal, enjoying the young life within us and around us. The clear soft trickle of the water seemed to harmonize with the clack of our hungry jaws, as we brought them to bear upon the contents of the basket. I went to work with a will; my long climb in the open air had given me a wonderful relish for our bread and cheese. Landry's valour even eclipsed mine. His mouth opened widely, like the beak of a bird who attempts to swallow a seed too big for him, and a whole egg disappeared at one swoop. Xavière, on the other hand, was not a satisfactory guest. She would only take a thin slice of roll, from which she broke off an occasional morsel, eating it without any appetite, and, indeed, without any apparent perception of its flavour. Yet Prudence's rolls were exquisite morsels, fresh, crisp, and lightly baked a delicious golden brown. But perhaps Xavière had eaten too many raw chestnuts, and they had given her the indigestion against which Landry had warned her.

I was hard at work myself, as I have said, but I nevertheless kept a close watch on Benoîte's daughter. She was seated on the low stone parapet

of the basin, holding in her right hand the piece of roll, in her left a long holly switch, stripped of its leaves save for a prickly tuft at the point. Every now and then, she turned, perhaps to escape my gaze, and drew the bushy crown of her wand across the surface of the quiet pool, as if playfully sweeping the crystal pavement that stretched between Fonjouve and Les Passettes among the pointed rocks. Startled from its glassy slumber, the polished surface shivered, drew its calm face into a thousand wrinkles, and rippling circles widened till they touched the mossy banks, sweet with the perfume of wild balm, carpeted with mallows, and golden with spikes of yellow water-flags. Then, as Xavière lifted her holly sapling into the air, the water fell in showers from every prickly point, and dropped into the stream, light and soft as daisy petals, with a tinkling sound like the notes of our accordion.

How miserably she was clad, how delicate, how fragile she looked! No bodice to her gown, only a sort of loose jacket of holland, patched in many places, and here and there worn so thin that the round whiteness of young flesh shone through and dazzled me. Yet what an aroma of chastity floated round her, as she sat posed like some youthful saint! A rough woollen petticoat striped with blue reached to her calves, leaving the rest of her legs bare. What pretty ankles she had, small and rounded, the ankle-bone standing out a little sharply on each side from the absence of any fleshy covering, and reminding me of two polished chestnuts just fallen from the hull, and still soft with downy bloom! Her bare feet were cased in enormous sabots, sabots that had no doubt belonged to her father, Xavier. Now and then the too ample covering fell from them, and gleaming in the flickering reflections of trees and water like virgin wax, they seemed to me exactly like the exquisite little feet of Saint Philomena, in her shrine above the chapel altar, among the tall candlesticks and the gilded vases laden with white lilies.

One thing about Xavière impressed me strangely. This was the singular immobility of her gaze. The eyes of this little Camplong peasant girl were extraordinarily large and dark, and somewhat round in shape, and they seemed to see nothing and nobody, but to be fixed in an eternal contemplation of something within herself. They

shone under her widely-opened lids, bright and transparent as our windows at the Presbytère, when Prudence has cleaned them with whitening, and their gaze wandered from side to side with a sort of vague indifference. The trees and rocks, all the landscape round the spring were mirrored in their clear depths; now and again I caught the reflection of Landry's figure, or of my own, but I am bound to say they shewed not the faintest interest in either persons or things around. And indeed, her whole face, with its pale, clear, olive skin, its straight nose, its serious lips, its rosy mouth, like the cleft pomegranate I had noticed on the tree in our garden, its delicately rounded chin, smooth and polished as one of the pebbles in the brook, every feature, in short, was impressed with the same characteristic impassibility and indifference, the same air of detachment from all earthly interests.

What could it have been that had thus shaken loose the hold of this young soul on her birthplace and her fellow-creatures? Her mother's harshness, no doubt. How could she look lovingly on a world she had found so hard, on creatures she had found so cruel? Alas! poor child!

"So you are very unhappy at home, poor Xavière!" I said abruptly.

"I, unhappy, Monsieur le Neveu?" she stammered.

"Your mother ill-treats you, I know. But take courage; M. le Curé is watching over you, and from this day forth, your mother shall beat you no more."

"Oh, as to blows, I care nothing about them."

"What! Do you not feel them then?"

"Look you, Monsieur le Neveu, since God took away my dear father, I don't know how it is, but I seem hardly to feel anything. When my mother screams at me, or beats me, or starves me, I feel as if it were not *me* at all she is screaming at, or beating, or starving——"

"Then you must have grown into a sort of log, Xavière Ouradou."

"Yes, Monsieur le Neveu, that's just it. I am like a block of chestnut or ash-wood, and I have no more feeling than my sabots."

"But you told me just now," interposed Landry, "that the blow your mother gave me yesterday, on the shore of the Espase, made you cry in the night, when you thought of it."

"But that is not the same, Landry. That was you, not me!" she replied, a sudden fire kindling in her cold eyes.

And she went on with the quick alert utterance of a linnet on the bough of an almond tree: "I do not understand why it is, Monsieur le Neveu; but when M. Landrinier, who, you know, is not any kinder than my mother, gives Landry a blow, I cannot tell you how miserable it makes me. A hundred beatings of my own could not make me suffer as one of his does. And I tell you frankly, I would much rather die than see my poor Landry wounded again as my mother wounded him yesterday."

"Then you must love Landry very much."

"Oh, yes, I do indeed love him!"

"But I am not sure, Xavière, that it is right for you to love a boy so much," I remark, mindful of the lessons of my uncle and of Prudence on the subject of purity, "more fragile than the altar-glasses," as they have often assured me. And this was a simile that came home to me, for I had broken two pairs of the frail vessels in one year.

Xavière turned her great eyes on Landry with a look that I had never dreamt of seeing in their depths, so ardent that it seemed to warm me as it shot past me, then, going up to him, she deliberately threw a pair of slender, willowy arms round his neck, and kissed him again and again, under my very nose!

"Is he a boy like Galibert?"

"Yes, most certainly——" I protested.

"He is Landry, he is my Landry!" she cried, rising to her full height, and raising her arms to heaven. I gazed at her in absolute bewilderment. She seemed to float on wings, to be rising above me into space, radiant, transfigured, angelic, as I had never before seen her, and as I am sure no one else in the whole parish had ever seen her.

All at once, from behind the densest part of the clusters of wild fig-trees, just above the rock out of which the water sprang, we heard a sort of grunting sound and the cracking of dry branches under some heavy body. It was not late enough in the year for the wolves; could some wild beast be crouching there in the thicket? A wild beast indeed



rushed out upon us, grinding her teeth. No other than Benoîte Ouradou, her face livid with rage, her coarse hair bristling, her eyes flaming.

"Is this the way you keep guard against Galibert's sheep, you child of Satan?" she yelled to her daughter. "They are eating my chestnuts, they are eating my chestnuts!"

And pointing with one hand to the Bassacs' flock, munching away blissfully along the edge of the plantation, she grasped the holly wand she had picked up by the fountain, and lashed her daughter across the shoulders with it.

"Cruel, wicked wretch!" I screamed.

Xavière sprang forward, and hurried down the slopes towards the stream. Benoîte pushed her way again through the thicket, and returned to her drying-ground. As to Landry, I saw him flying along the road to Les Passettes at full speed.

I stood for a moment irresolute, then my mind was made up. I would go at once in search of my uncle, and together we would sally forth against Benoîte Ouradou.

I hurriedly replaced in my basket a roll, one of the cheeses we had scarcely touched, and the unopened bottle of wine, supreme token of Prudence's unwonted liberality, and then I hastily climbed the overgrown track that led to the top of the rock. Thence I could shout, and my uncle would hear me. Swift as Landry, flying terror-stricken towards Les Passettes, I flew up the incline, but *I* was too indignant to feel frightened.

"Ah, we shall see, we shall see, Benoîte!" I muttered, passionately.

And I pushed through the fig-trees and the reeds, the pliant shoots of which rebounded against me, cutting my face and threatening my eyes.

"I want you, my dear child. Come along quickly——"

What! my uncle was there, and he wanted me! What had happened to him? That monster of a Benoîte was capable of raising her hand against the Almighty in person! Could she have——?

I parted the branches of the thicket. My dear uncle Fulcran was standing above.

"Make haste, make haste," he repeated.

I was soon by his side on the narrow ledge of rock above the spring.

It measures about six feet across, and is green with lavender, marjoram, wild thyme, and every kind of herb. From this high point among the chestnuts of Fonjouve, one can hear the waters struggling to escape from the earth, gurgling at the mouth of the spring, and survey the whole sinuous course of the Minier, till it loses itself in the Espase.

"Well, uncle, what is it?" I asked, breathlessly.

Without speaking, he took me by the hand, and led me to the middle of the ledge on which we stood. It was hardly wider than our round table at home. I understood nothing of all this, but my anxiety was at once relieved by the sight of my uncle's face. His features beamed with tranquil pleasure, a happy smile played round his lips.

He spoke at last : "Stand there without stirring, I am going back a few paces to see the effect. Be sure not to move."

I was greatly bewildered, so much so, that I forgot Benoîte Ouradou.

"Stretch your arms out in front of you."

I obeyed.

"No, not like that. Try to make the action more supple, more inviting."

I altered the curve of my elbows.

"That is almost right. Think of the picture in your prayer-book, of Jesus standing with bowed head, and saying : "Suffer the little children to come unto me, *Sinite parvulos venire ad me.*"

I inclined my head towards my right shoulder.

"Perfect, perfect!" he cried.

He emerged from the brushwood, and presently re-appeared upon the rocky platform.

"Yes, it would be beautiful," he said, "and I think, after all, I shall get my statue of the Child Jesus. I have been setting my heart on it for the last three years, but the money has always been the obstacle. It would grieve me to think that I should die without having sanctified this corner that archæologists, I know not on what grounds, have discovered to be 'pagan' in character. What I long to see is M. Fuzien-Grimoldas' 'Fountain of Jupiter,' and M. le Doyen Monestier's 'Fountain of Youth,' alike transformed into M. le Chanoine Philibert Tulipier's 'Fountain of Jesus.'"

"Then do you think you will be able to raise the money?"

"Well, M. le Chanoine Philibert Tulipier has founded a Loan Society at Lyons, which goes by the name of 'The Parochial Fund Society.' Its object is to advance sums of money for useful purposes to poor parishes, and according to the *Réveil Catholique de Lyon,* it has been of incalculable benefit in many districts already. I remember last year my good friend and neighbour, M. Alexandre Matheron, Curé of Graissessac, waxed very indignant over one of M. l'Abbé Tulipier's prospectuses, and after reading it through, shouted in my ear—he is very deaf, and talks very loudly—'Have nothing to say to it, my dear brother; I fear this Abbé Tulipier is not a man to be depended on.' I wonder what he thought when he read in the *Réveil,* about three months ago : In recognition of the valuable services rendered to the clergy by M. l'Abbé Philibert Tulipier, his Eminence, Monseigneur le Cardinal de Bonald, Archbishop of Lyons, has conferred on him the dignity of honorary Canon—— By the way, my child, suppose we take our luncheon?"

"I think, uncle, we had better go on to Les Passettes, and get something to eat at the Arribases', they will be feasting to-day in honour of Arribassou's departure for Saint-Pons. And besides, the basket is half empty."

"Were you so hungry, then, my child?"

"No, it was not that. But I found Landry and Xavière by the fountain, eating raw chestnuts and——"

"You shared our food with them?"

"Was I wrong, uncle?"

"On the contrary, my dear child. I am going to tell you a little anecdote, which I hope you will remember all your life. Before St. Vincent de Paul touched any meal prepared for him, he would go in search of two poor people to share his food with him. 'I must have them,' he used to say, 'I should have no appetite without them.'

"And now we will go on to Les Passettes, as you seem to have a fancy for that road."



THE PAN PIPE

My uncle talked eagerly and incessantly, in the high piping tone of a blackbird in full song, as we wound along the banks of the Minier, brushing the fruit-laden boughs of medlar and service-trees. He would call a meeting of the building committee, induce the wavering churchwardens to vote the necessary sum; then he would beg M. le Chanoine Philibert Tulipier to give them time for the payment in full. The Chanoine might be relied upon to send the most charming statue of the Child Jesus from Lyons. Unhappily, we were already in his debt——

"And what about your letter to Monseigneur Augustin Pannetier, Bishop designate of Mireval?" I interrupted, at length.

My uncle looked as if I had suddenly thrown a stone that had struck him in some sensitive part. He gave a sort of groan, ceased his lively chatter, and stopped, staring fixedly at me.

"Pity me, my child," he said, mournfully—— "This was all I could accomplish during my two hours under the great chestnut."

He unfolded the two sheets of paper I had torn from my book of translations in the morning, and held them out to me. On the first I read the words: "My dear friend——" On the second, in large, laborious letters.: "Monseigneur——"

"I am really ashamed to confess it, but this is all my poor brain has produced so far. My first idea was, that as my old schoolfellow at the Great and the Little Seminary had not yet received his canonical institution,

which comes, not from the King but the Holy Father, our mutual relations were unchanged, and that I might address him to-day as I should have done yesterday, by the sweet and simple name of friend. But then, looking more closely into the matter, it struck me, that if the King had chosen a bishop among the Carmelites of Montpellier, he was no doubt directed so to do by the special guidance of God, and the pencil trembled in my hand. To my mind it seems clear enough that if the government saw the fitness of the Abbé Augustin Pannetier for the high dignity bestowed upon him, it was because his modesty, his humility, his many secret virtues betrayed him at last, as it were, in spite of himself, and pointed to him as the man of all others for the post. 'He is of the seed of the saints, *de semine Sanctorum,*' I said to myself. And discerning the episcopal character in him already, I took my paper, and with enthusiasm I traced the glorious word 'Monseigneur.'"

"Yes, but that was all. The rest of the page is blank."

"Alas! my long debate had exhausted my strength, for darkness seemed to come over my understanding, and I felt incapable of turning a single sentence. To such humiliating eclipse is man's boasted intellect subject! I strained every nerve, but without result! In the chestnut boughs above me, bullfinches and linnets warbled the song of praise the Almighty has taught them as if they would burst their little throats, carolling their joy in all the fair nature round them, whilst I sat dumb and helpless, unable to find a word with which to greet my friend——"

"And yet your health is better than usual just now, dear uncle."

"One cause of my sterility was no doubt my desire to say too many things at once. So many thoughts came into my mind, and I let them all escape, perhaps because I tried to catch them all on the wing, like butterflies. Too exalted an ambition carries its own destruction along with it. God follows our every footstep, ready to chastise our pride as He sees best. And I reckoned upon the effects of the open air, and the sight of our fields and woods in their autumn splendour, to help me with my letter."

"How could the air and the fields help you with your letter?"

"When you go next year with Arribassou to the Little Seminary at

Saint-Pons, your professors will give you among your books a '*Course of French Literature by M. Grozillez, Canon of Saint-Dié.*' In this excellent work you will find extracts from our great authors, and, among others, one on page 427 from Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a writer not wanting in talent, but who was, unhappily, the enemy of God and of His Christ. In the passage selected, the author declares that the best of his work was done during his walks and rambles in the country. The other day at Les Passettes, I amused myself by turning over Arribassou's school books, and I came upon this page of Jean Jacques. It was perhaps because I attempted to follow the advice of a blasphemer that God withdrew His help from me to-day. Why should I have thought it advisable to seek aid in collecting my ideas and giving them meet expression, from the methods of such an one as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a blind guide indeed? In the *Imitation,* Book I, Chapter VII, we read : 'Do what you can, and God will co-operate with your good endeavours, *Fac quod in te est, et Deus aderit bonæ voluntati tuæ.*'"

We had reached Benoîte Ouradou's drying-house, a dilapidated lean-to, full of cracks and crannies, one angle abutting on the road. I feel no more enthusiasm for the Latin of the *Imitation* than for that of Virgil; they both weary me to death. Besides, as I brushed against Benoîte's tottering wall, my indignation revived in all its strength. I instantly picked up a stone, and began to knock furiously at the door of the shed.

"What are you doing, child?" asked my uncle.

"As we are going on to Les Passettes, I will ask Benoîte to keep the basket till we come back this evening. She is here, I know."

No one answered my summons, and I began to call loudly through the keyhole : "Benoîte Ouradou, Benoîte Ouradou!"

The door was softly opened a very little way. In the dark aperture between the ashlar jamb and the panel of chestnut wood, we saw the sparkle of two matches kindled in the darkness.

"What are you doing here, Monsieur Landrinier?" I asked, recognizing the schoolmaster by the twinkle of his great round spectacles.

"Is it you, Schoolmaster?" asked my uncle.



"Yes, indeed! He follows Benoîte to Fonjouve, as a sportsman follows the red partridge across the open ground at Bataillo."

"Monsieur le Neveu——" expostulated the schoolmaster, very ill at ease.

He came out, letting the heavy iron latch drop noisily behind the door, and stood upon the threshold.

"Don't shut the door," I said, "I want to speak to Benoîte."

"Benoîte has gone up to look at her crop."

"She was here just now. It was from here she rushed up towards the fountain, and flung herself upon Xavière like a wild beast."

"What! has Benoîte been beating her daughter again?" exclaimed my uncle, his voice hoarse with sudden emotion.

"Yes, I was there and I saw it all. Benoîte took a holly-stick and beat Xavière till the blood came."

I had scarcely finished when my uncle hoisted himself on to a neighbouring rock, and turning his face towards the chestnut grove, began to shout with all the remnant of the feeble strength he had been supporting for so long on his three gulps of racahout : "Benoîte! Benoîte! Benoîte!"

Unfortunately the wind carried his voice away into space.

However, my uncle shouted away valiantly. Presently a clump of briars about twenty paces from us shook and bent as if about to make way for some one to emerge; the next moment the *garde champêtre,* his gun under his arm, disengaged himself from the tangled suckers, and stood before us, tattered and squalid as a scarecrow.

"Laviron," said the Curé to him, in a tone of command, "it is your duty to keep order in my parish, not only in the fields, but in the village. I order you now, and this evening you will be ordered by Monsieur Bassac, under my instructions, to keep your eye upon Benoîte Ouradou. That wretched mother ill-treats her daughter, a girl who is an example to the whole parish, as no stepmother would do."

"Monsieur le Curé, allow me to——" began Landrinier.

I turned upon him furiously.

"*You* are a proper person to put your word in!" I exclaimed. "To think of *your* having the face to speak at all in the matter?"

"Really, sir——"

"You deserve to be put under surveillance every bit as much as Benoîte, for you are just as cruel to Landry as Benoîte is to Xavière."

"Monsieur le Curé!" gasped Landrinier, "will you please order your nephew to curb his tongue?"

"Do you know what I should do for you if I were M. le Curé? I should at once dismiss you from your post as bell-ringer and leader of the choir. A man who lets his child die of hunger, and beats him from morning till night, is not fit to hold any office in the church. He ought not to be allowed to enter it even."

Hitherto the schoolmaster had stood with his back against the door, as if fearful lest we should make some attempt to enter. But alarmed by my tirade and its threatened consequences to his pocket, his avarice got the better of his vigilance; he left his post, and hastened to my uncle, whose hands he seized with a gesture of affectionate respect. Then, as was his wont, he began to attack the Curé on his soft side, to hoodwink him with honeyed words.

As for me, my mind was full of one fixed idea. Benoîte was not up in the chestnut woods, she was hiding in the drying-house. With a bound I was at the door, had raised the latch, and entered. It was as I thought. Benoîte was crouching within, listening with all her ears, and clutching at the door with claw-like fingers.

"Here she is! Here she is!" I shouted, my wrath exploding afresh.

But when I rushed out on the threshold, calling upon them all to come and see the wild beast in her den, my uncle, beguiled by the hypocritical schoolmaster, frowned upon me with the utmost severity.

"You are too violent, nephew; have the goodness to behave more calmly and more charitably. Woe unto him by whom offence cometh! *Væ homini per quem scandalum venit.*" And he turned his back on me.

There was nothing for it but to follow him, without even stopping to bestow a box on the ears of old Laviron, who was calmly devouring our remaining cheese, and washing it down with prolonged draughts from our bottle. I suppose my uncle had given him leave, while I was ransacking the drying-house. But it was really scandalous to see that old man of seventy gulping down our Frontignan, the wine we use for mass!

"You wretched old drunkard!" I shouted, exasperated past all endurance.

A curious little corner is the hamlet of Les Passettes, hidden among the fallen boulders of Bataillo just at the source of the Espase. The river has much ado to make its way from among the obstacles that bar its passage, and breaks round them into a score of little streams that blend again below. The rugged landscape, shaded by huge trees, is wild and savage in character, yet there is a sturdy grace about it that gives it a strangely unique charm. As you approach from Fonjouve, you cross a succession of little rustic bridges, *passes* or *passettes,* and come upon Joseph Lasserre's hut, the first of the scanty buildings that constitute the village. The old man was the poorest of our parish, little above a beggar. We found him sitting on his doorstep, basking in the sunshine that broke through the tall poplars of the riverside.

"Good day, Monsieur le Curé, a very good day to you," he mumbled, uncovering a mass of silvery hair, that shone in the light, long and snowy as the flax on Prudence's distaff.

"God be with you, Joseph," said my uncle affectionately.

Then, taking the old man's hands in his, he added :

"Don't forget to come and dine with me on Sunday, after the high mass."

"Do you mean me to come *every* Sunday then, Monsieur le Curé? Blessings on your kind heart."

A few yards further on we opened the rustic gate that led into the Arribases' orchard. A green lawn stretched from the gate to the house, set so closely with apple-trees that we seemed to be passing under a canopy of clustering fruit; apples of every sort, green, red, and yellow. Beneath the laden trees, Jacques Arribas' children were dancing, joining hands. I first recognized Arribassou, the eldest; then his three younger brothers, Paul, Thomas, Adrien; then a long string of little sisters, Ursule, Marthe, Toinette, Jacqueline, Marie, the last only four years old. The whole joyous band was laughing, jumping, gambolling, fluttering, twirling, advancing, and retiring, skimming the grass like a flight of birds, and Landry, my Landry, seated on the low forked branch of a fig-tree, was

making music for them. My friend held between his fingers one of those flutes cut from an elder-tree, such as he alone could manufacture, and from his rustic pipe he drew sounds, now lively, now pathetic, a music all his own that delighted the ear and stirred the heart strangely.

"Doubtless," whispered my uncle, "if M. Fuzien-Grimoldas of Montpellier were to see Landry astride that fig-branch, his feet dangling, his flute between his lips, he would liken him to Pan piping to the nymphs by some hidden stream of Thrace——"

The party caught sight of us, and in a moment the dance was broken up. In less time than it takes to write, the whole Arribas progeny had swarmed round my uncle, flinging their arms about him, and clamouring for kisses. Anxious to spare my uncle's exhausted strength I began to do part of the kissing for him, first to the right, then to the left. The merry band chattered shrilly all around us, uttering piercing cries and exclamations, like so many linnets and chaffinches. Finally, they rushed towards the house to announce our advent. Jacques Arribas came running out, full of apologies; his wife Julienne followed suit; then Arribassou.

"Why had we come so late? If they had only known!—— If they had only expected us—— How delighted they would have been!—— Dinner was over—— Arribassou was to start at three, and Rosette"—the animals all have names in the Cévennes, just as their masters have—"Rosette was harnessed, ready for the start."

Meanwhile Julienne had made a sign, and the servants who were clearing the table set beneath the apple-trees, spread a clean cloth, brought plates and glasses and the remains of a roast lamb. The boiling fat with which the meat had been basted had scored it with long golden furrows most appetising to behold. Terrible breaches had been made in the carcase; nevertheless the remains promised well, and met with my utmost approval.

"No, no, Arribas," says my uncle. He has the appetite of a sparrow, and recoils in terror at such a Homeric feast.

"Oh, but you really must, Monsieur le Curé, to please me," insists Julienne.

"A cup of milk will be plenty for me, indeed."

I am losing patience during this debate. My uncle may drink milk, if he likes; I am for the lamb, as far as I am concerned.

We sat down at last and began our meal, my dear uncle not altogether reluctant, and I simply ravenous. As we ate, Landry climbed once more into his tree, seized his flute, and the dancing recommenced with fresh vigour. I can imagine no sounds more simple, more tender, more pastoral, more lovely in their way than those the schoolmaster's son drew from his pipe of elder wood, no sight more graceful, more delightful, more fresh and charming, than the band of dancing children, their young faces aglow with a joy that transfigured them, bright with the radiance of youth in its first bloom.

"Ah! what a good fellow that Landry is, and how he amuses my children!" said Julienne, who stood beside us eager to supply our wants.

"Landry can do everything," I remarked.

"Judging by the portrait in my breviary," said my uncle, "Adolphe Landrinier is the very image of St. Louis of Gonzaga. He has the same long, pale face, the same fair, silky hair, the same look of suffering and holiness."

"What a pity it is he has such a harsh father!" exclaimed the kind-hearted Julienne. "M. Landrinier takes his meals with us on Tuesdays, and he can't always hold his tongue when he has eaten and drunk his fill. It seems that he thinks of nothing now, save of getting married again, to Benoîte Ouradou. But why should he ill-use Landry? As if Landry, poor feeble creature, could prevent him from carrying out his greedy schemes."

"His greedy schemes?" repeated my uncle, questioningly.

"Don't you see, Monsieur le Curé, that if Landrinier marries Benoîte he becomes the owner of Fonjouve, and of the most productive chestnut woods in the whole country-side."

"Not at all, Julienne; Fonjouve does not belong to Benoîte. It was the inheritance of François Xavier Ouradou, now no more, and his daughter, Françoise Xavière Ouradou, will claim the property when she reaches her majority in two or three years' time."

"That may or may not come to pass, Monsieur le Curé. Xavière may die meanwhile."

"But she is so young, Julienne. Why should she die, a girl of sixteen!"

"She is young, I know, but she is frail and delicate as a reed——"

The music had ceased. Rosette came slowly into sight with the cart.

"If you care to have a lift, Monsieur le Curé," said Jacques Arribas, "I will put you and Monsieur le Neveu down at your own door. We must stop at Bédarieux and again at Olargues to give the mule a feed, so I don't reckon upon getting to Saint-Pons much before eight o'clock to-morrow morning."

Under the apple-trees there was a sound of kisses, loud and hearty, little sharp reports like the popping of chestnuts on the hearth. Eyes were full of tears, notably Julienne's.

"Good-bye, my Arribassou, good-bye!" she murmured again and again, in a choking voice.

We settled ourselves in the cart. It was well stuffed with straw, and covered with a thick awning, in preparation for the night journey. Rosette shook her bells, and set off at a steady trot.

FERDINAND FABRE.

(To be continued.)





THE COMÉDIE-FRANÇAISE

MOUNET-SULLY

The terrible war of 1870 was just over. M. Perrin had been appointed Director of the Comédie-Française, and he was seeking everywhere for new recruits to infuse fresh life into that admirable company of proved veterans whose victories had at last tired out public admiration. He had a presentiment of the very marked taste which the public was on the point of showing for the lofty sentiments of antique tragedy, and he was vexed at not finding among the eminent comedians bequeathed to him by his predecessor a single young man capable of declaiming either the fury of Orestes or the declaration of Hippolytus. He made enquiries of the professors at the Conservatoire.

"Now you mention it," said Bressant to him, "I did have a queer sort of fellow in my class who was nicknamed by his comrades *Midi à quatorze heures,* because he was possessed by a strange passion for singularity, bordering upon extravagance. He once took a prize for tragedy. There was something in that topsy-turvy brain; he had the artistic temperament."

As it turned out it was some time before they could lay their hands on him. M. Perrin, with all the keenness of a manager who feels that he has got on the right scent, would say from time to time to Bressant :

"Well, what about this young fellow of yours?"

"Egad," answered Bressant, one day, "some one has just been talking to me about him. I know where he is."

"Go and hunt him up for me. I am on the point of mounting *Andromaque* again. If he is all that you say, and should turn out to be the right sort of man, we will give him the part of Orestes at once and he shall come out next month."

The young fellow in whom all this interest was being taken without his knowledge, and whose fortunes were about to be changed in a day, like a scene in a fairy piece, was at that time reduced to the last extremities of grief and despair. He was hesitating whether he ought to renounce the stage entirely or to take an engagement in some country town. He had been pursued up to then by persistent ill-luck.

He was born on the 27th of February, 1841, at Bergerac, of a respectable middle-class family. I don't know whether his name, Mounet-Sully, is really that of his father or whether he has touched it up so as to be a little more sonorous on the bills. His Christian name was Jean. He had studied hard both in his native town and at Toulouse, and had felt himself, from the first, drawn towards the stage by an irresistible vocation. It seems he had much difficulty in getting leave from his family to come up to Paris and compete for admission to the Conservatoire.

After two years of study and with his prize for tragedy in his pocket, he got an engagement at the Odéon in 1868, and there he stayed for twenty-two months without once having the chance of attracting the attention of the critics. I give here, as a curiosity, the list of parts in which he appeared without any one in any theatrical notice ever doing more than mentioning his name with the addition of a scrap of commonplace praise : Cornouailles in *Le Roi Lear,* Verdille in *Jeanne de Lignarès* by Marc Bayeux, a Patrician in M. Édouard Fournier's *Guttenberg,* Sextus in the revival of *Lucrèce,* Daubrun in Touroude's *Le Bâtard,* Massala in *L'Affranchi* by La Tour de Saint-Ybars, Arnor in *La Flava* by some unknown author or other.

You can imagine with what a burst of joy and gratitude Mounet-Sully welcomed the messenger from heaven, his old professor, when the latter said to him : "Follow me, M. Perrin is asking for you."

It was the future that was opening before him.

M. Perrin found himself confronted by a handsome lad, admirably planted on his legs, with flowing hair, the face of an Arab chief, and big, deep, melancholy eyes. It was a case of charm at first sight.

"Come again to-morrow," he said, "and I will give you a hearing. You shall repeat some lines before the Committee, which shall be summoned for the purpose."

This hearing was a triumph. His voice was sonorous and of admirable timbre, his gestures magnificent. The four or five *sociétaires* convoked by M. Émile Perrin were delighted, and Mounet-Sully was engaged on the spot. Three months later he came out in the part of Orestes (July 1872).

The recollection of this evening is still in the minds of all the *sociétaires*. When Mounet-Sully came on the stage with bare arms, superb arms that might have been cut out of a block of antique marble; with his hair falling in disorder over his brow; with his eyes, eyes full of Oriental melancholy, gleaming, a cry of admiration went up from the whole house. You fancied the stage to be occupied by one of those ardent and fierce Arabs that Henri Regnault used to delight in painting. It was a new way of conceiving the part and of presenting the character.

The two first acts passed without applause; not that people showed themselves churlish for this young fellow with the handsome face, the elegant appearance, and impetuosity of style, who accentuated by an air of fierce turbulence the idea of the fate that fastens upon Orestes and impels him, in spite of himself, to the most monstrous crimes; but the whole commencement of Racine's tragedy does not give scope for violent outbursts of passion. One had a vague feeling of a secret disproportion between the sombre fury of the character, as presented by Mounet-Sully, and the relatively temperate sentiments put into his mouth by the poet.

It was in the third act that the ice was broken. In such pathetic and terrible tones did he utter the lines :

> "Tout lui rirait, Pylade : et moi, pour mon partage,
> Je n'emporterais donc qu'une inutile rage ?
> J'irais loin d'elle encor tâcher de l'oublier ?
> Non, non : à mes tourments je veux l'associer."

that the public burst into loud applause thrice repeated.

And then—— oh, then, a quite extraordinary thing occurred, the actor and his public lost their heads together and took the bit between their teeth. It is so deep a delight among very impressionable people like the first-night public, to see a new-comer hit upon absolutely novel effects on the stage and gratify them with an impression on which they had not reckoned; it is also such an intoxication for an actor, yesterday unknown, and still inexperienced, to feel that through a flash of rapid invention, instantaneous, violent success is coming to him, as blood rushes to the face, that both on one side and the other it is easy to lose your head, and both parties, becoming over-excited in a sort of emulation, end in outbursts of inconceivable energy. To the young fellow's faults no one paid any further attention. All his "points" told, and that with prodigious intensity. He, himself, pushed on, hurried away by this whirlwind of sudden admiration, played with his nerves, as they say in stage slang, and surpassed himself. He was at once better and more eccentric than he ever could be again.

Next day he was the one topic of the Boulevards. It was one of those cases of sudden, irresistible popularity which Paris is fond of. And yet this tumultuous, disorderly style of playing did not fail to inspire some anxiety in critical minds. On the morning after the first performance I wrote, while recording the immense success of the new-comer : "Let him beware of the people who encourage him to violent outbursts to which he is already too much inclined. He will always have quite enough vehemence and fire; what he has to learn is correctness and moderation."

The event has fully proved that these reservations were just and necessary. The second appearance of Mounet-Sully was made in *Le Cid,* in which he had Maubant and Mademoiselle Sarah Bernhardt for partners. At the present moment Rodrigue is one of Mounet-Sully's best parts, one of those in which he is most thoroughly at home. But before arriving at this perfection, what stages of groping hesitation he has had to pass through!

The unlucky fellow, seduced doubtless by the applause he had gained in the part of Orestes, yielding perhaps to a preconceived taste for melancholy or fierce heroes like Hamlet and Othello, persisted, during the rehearsals, in seeing nothing in Rodrigue but a lover in despair, a Lignon shepherd



MOUNET-SULLY

(COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE)

whose love has turned his brain. M. Perrin in vain took him aside to explain to him what a grave error was his. No, he would not listen; he followed his own idea with gentle obstinacy; to all objurgations, to all prayers he answered with imperturbable politeness : "That's the way I feel the part."

Where were those bursts of generous passion, those gay flashes of heroism that go to make the sovereign grace and the immortal beauty of the Cid? Those cries : *A moi, comte, deux mots*—— *As-tu peur de mourir?*—— *Tout autre que mon père*——, that are, as it were, the natural bubbling up of a young and chivalrous soul, those marvellous *gasconnades* bursting into life under the southern sun, Mounet-Sully enveloped them all in the haze of a northern reverie. What surprise there was when we saw him the first night come on the stage with his locks strangely circled round his head, a look of fate in his face, rolling wild eyes, and prolonging with the sonorous note of some night bird the end of every verse, so as to give it a deep impress of melancholy despair!

It was a cruel disappointment, Mounet-Sully had discovered in Orestes with what instantaneous fury a success is launched in Paris; on the present evening he was able to see what unlooked-for and rapid falls there are there, too.

This incident which, by the way, had no sequel, the artist having improved himself in the ensuing performances, confirmed the anxious forebodings of serious judges, who, while recognizing the admirable natural gifts of the young artist, feared that his good sense was not so marked, nor his intelligence so comprehensive, as his temperament was original and powerful. If at least, they said, he would only listen to the advice of masters and profit by it!

But not a bit of it, people soon heard through behind-the-scenes chatter that Mounet-Sully, not through overweening pride nor even through mere mischievous wrong-headedness, but through a natural inability to understand the bearing of a piece of advice, owing to some irremediable *lacuna* in his brain, stuck with courteous obstinacy to the interpretation he had himself assigned to a part, and that neither the prayers of his comrades, nor the observations of his director, nor even the objurga-

tions of the author were o the least avail against this persistent obstinacy.

"For heaven's sake, sir," said Émile Augier to him one day, out of patience, "try and have a little less genius and a little more talent!" And he left the rehearsal unstrung and unwell. He confessed to me that he could never induce himself to see *Jean de Thommeray* again after the first performance, so afraid was he that Mounet-Sully's appearance on the stage would revive the bitter recollection of two months thrown away in licking him into shape.

What is strangest of all is that Mounet-Sully is the first to suffer from that inability to profit by advice which seems to be a congenital malady with him. He takes his head in his hands, he falls into the most profound fits of dejection that sometimes go so far as tears. But you see it is not his fault. There is something wrong with one of the lobes of his brain, or maybe it is some malign will-o'-the-wisp that mocks at his good intentions, and delights to disconcert them.

During the rehearsals of *Hernani* you could see the difference between an assured comedian and an artist by temperament, between a Worms and a Mounet-Sully. While Worms built up the part regularly, making progress every day, storing up the tones acquired and the gestures agreed on so thoroughly that at each rehearsal a start could be made from the work done the previous day towards a higher point, it was for Mounet-Sully a case every morning of beginning all over again. One day he was praised for some well-delivered verse, the next he brought to it an entirely different interpretation, and if it was pointed out to him that the change was not quite happy, he was naïvely astonished or fell into despairing outbursts of heart-breaking grief. Sometimes M. Perrin, irritated at the turn things took, unable to put an end to this instability, in short at the end of his expedients, would quit the rehearsal, leaving his second in command to finish it. He would have to calm himself down in the open air.

When it chanced that Mounet-Sully, as in the case of *Hamlet,* was responsible for the piece as a whole, he disconcerted and fatigued his comrades by constant alteration of the setting of the scenery, and by insisting on incredibly minute details. More than once the lofty roof of the Comédie-Française has resounded with quarrels bred of tiresome



LE FOYER DES ACTEURS

À LA COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE

Cliché Chalot

rehearsals. There were some who swore never to meet Mounet-Sully again, never to rehearse with him again. But he was so candid in his outbursts; he had such a graceful way of returning to his better self, and then he was such a great artist, that it was all forgotten. People said to one another : "He's a little cracked."

And the public thought so too. They listened to him with no sense of security, they were always expecting some freak or other. They trembled on seeing this unequal and tumultuous artist come on the stage : What would Mounet be like this evening? Would he speak so low as not to be heard even in the first rows of the stalls, or would he shout so loud as to frighten the attendants? Would he play stock-still, or would he bound about like a jaguar grinding his teeth? No one could guess nor could he guess himself.

And yet there are parts that he has put on a sufficiently firm basis to be appreciably always the same in them, and in these parts he is perfection itself. I can cite six in which he is incomparable : Hippolytus in *Phèdre,* Orestes in *Andromaque,* Rodrigue in *Le Cid,* Orosmane in *Zaïre,* and lastly Hamlet and Œdipus.

It is in these two last that he has won the frankest admiration of the crowd. It would be unjust to him to restrict him to them. *Zaïre,* unhappily, has not won much favour with the men of the present generation. But what a marvellous Orosmane! When he came on the stage you might have thought that one of Regnault's water-colours had come out of its frame. Here was the Arab in the very form he had been revealed to us by the young painter, after Fromentin and Decamps. And what superb attitudes! Did he raise his arm and let fall the folds of his mantle with a harmonious movement, did he frame himself in the hangings against which you saw the Oriental beauty of his face; did he even, in his transports of fury, advance bent double like some wild beast, he might always have been a model for a painter. And with what an admirable gesture, after having buried the dagger in Zaïre's breast, he threw her back upon the cushions where she had to fall dead! Never did he more happily show off either the caressing grace or the resounding thunder of his admirable voice. What an Othello he will make one of these days!

It is in the "inky cloak" of Hamlet that the public most readily thinks of him to-day. It seems as though Mounet-Sully had identified himself with the pale and sombre hero of Shakespeare. For my part I prefer him in Œdipus. I cannot forget that it was in this part he gave me the strongest sensation I have ever felt in my life; when one evening under the starry sky in that marvellous theatre at Orange, before an innumerable multitude, bench upon bench of them, he came forward, superb and sad, and with his powerful voice began those lovely verses of Sophocles :

"Enfants du vieux Cadmus, jeune postérité!"

Tears came into every eye, tears of admiration and tenderness, those precious tears that only flow at the bidding of the higher poetry. We were, so to speak, dazzled; never since ancient times had so magnificent an actor filled so majestic a frame.

Mounet-Sully, whose reputation is European, might, like so many other artists, have trotted Œdipus and Hamlet across the two Americas, and have, like them, brought back his million. He has preferred to remain constant to the service of high art and to the applause of the Parisians. For that we are all sincerely and profoundly grateful to him.

FRANCISQUE SARCEY.



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